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What's the Matter with History?

BY ALLAN NEVINS

"The history of the South, the history of society, the history of business, all are new." . . . (Design for a mural, by Lorin Thompson, from "Art in Federal Buildings.")

ANOTHER thin and disappointing year in American historical writing, the second in succession, has come to an end. Neither in 1937 nor 1938 was a first-class, blue-ribbon historical work, apart from Charles M. Andrews's continuance of his colonial history (which must be judged as a whole rather than in parts) produced in this country. We had no book comparable to the very best volumes by Beard, James Truslow Adams, or Parrington; comparable to Webb's "The Great Plains," to Bowers's "Jefferson and Hamilton," to Van Wyck Brooks's "Flowering of New England," to the works by Sidney B. Fay and Bernadotte Schmitt on the origins of the World War. That is, we had no volume which could be called distinguished in the highest sense of the word. I do not underrate the solid merit of the books issued by such men as Frederic L. Paxson, Paul Buck, Frank Luther Mott, Everett Dick, James G. Randall, and C. C. Tansill, highly creditable to the authors and to American scholarship. But the merit of these books fell short of brilliancy. Nor did any historical work in these years attain a really wide reading public.

Perhaps thin interludes ought to be taken for granted; perhaps we ought not to expect anything like "The Coming of the World War" or "The Flowering of New England" every second year, or even every third. But with this meek view no real lover of history can agree. The comparatively barren patches in our historical writing are altogether too frequent and too protracted. They point beyond all question to some malady or some crippling disability. It should be considered that we have a population of 130,000,000, equal to that of Great Britain, France, and Italy combined. We have appliances for scholarly and creative work unapproached elsewhere in the world. We have an enormous body of practitioners or would-be practitioners of history. The field open to historians in American materials (to say nothing of the rest of the globe) is remarkably fresh as well as rich. Much of it has been discovered only within the last generation; the history of the Trans-Mississippi West, the history of the South, the history of society, the history of business, all are *new*, and still offer innumerable opportunities. And yet the lean years are far more numerous than the fat years.

Why? Why is it that biographic writing in this country so consistently outruns historical writing? The year 1938, for example, yielded two genuinely first-class biographies, Philip Jessup's "Elihu Root" and Carl Van Doren's "Franklin," as 1937 yielded one, Marquis James's "Jackson." No history in these two years was as witty and penetrating as Crane Brinton's "Lives of Talleyrand." Why is the record of history so often barren, and sometimes actually repellent? Beyond doubt the reasons are various, but I believe that one reason far outweighs all others.

Vitality, in history as in every other field of letters, means variety. Clio plays on the tender stops of various quills, not with one note or in one key. Her domain has room for realists, romantics, precisians, impressionists, Marxists, conservatives, and so on; it needs them all. The more motley the array, the richer the product. Place can be found for everybody but the dishonest and insincere, the great pests of history as of all other writing. Tolerance for all the varied types of historical writing is indispensable to the advance of history, and it opens the door not to confusion but to a desirable complexity. The more ideas we get into history the better, and ideas mean opinions. The enormous variety of historical materials and the steady development of disciplines applicable to these materials (especially sociology and economics) means an ever greater variety of historical views.

But when we turn from views to methods the picture becomes simplified. Historical writing, like ancient Gaul or present-day North America, falls into three main sovereignties. They are the domain of the pedants at one extreme, of the popularizers at the other, and in between of the great median body which (with varying degrees of emphasis) tries to unite literary and scholarly qualities. This division is well understood by the historical profession itself. It is well recognized by the general public, which—to use the names of dead writers—has no difficulty in identifying Herbert Levi Osgood's "American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century" as a product of the pedantic school, Henry Cabot Lodge's "Story of the Revolution" as a work of popularization, and the volumes of James Ford Rhodes or Henry Adams as belonging to the intermediate field. No general reader would hesitate for a moment to put Stubbs among the pedants, Guedalla among the popularizers, and Macaulay in the central group.

Such terms as these should, to assist discussion, be defined. The best members of the pedantic school of historians would indignantly reject that adjective, and declare that they ought to be called the scientific school. The best of the popularizers would say that they constitute the literary school *par excellence*. Let us therefore attempt a rough statement of signification. By the pedantic school is

Next Week

DANGEROUS BUSINESS
By ARTHUR TRAIN

LINCOLN TALKS
By EMANUEL HERTZ
Reviewed by Paul H. Buck

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meant those writers who are so preoccupied with the scholarly values of historical work—with laborious thoroughness and extreme accuracy—that they totally neglect all literary values. Most of them are also hostile to ideas as distinguished from facts. In their conception of history fact is everything, art nothing. By the school of popularizers is meant those who are so preoccupied with the literary values of their work—with interest and color—that they are careless or even contemptuous of precision and thoroughness. Obviously each group has many shadings, many subdivisions; obviously the role played by materials in giving one piece of work color and another aridity is great. But the three divisions stand. As they have just been defined, no one could fail to put Von Holst in one, Cyrus Townsend Brady in another, and Parkman in the third.

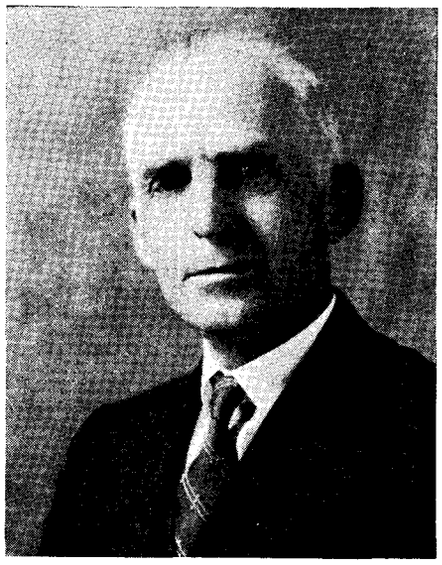
It must be evident to all except the blindest doctrinaires that the health of history depends upon keeping the median group, the writers who try to reconcile fact and art, strong at the expense of the two extremes. This is not to say that the dryasdust monographers do not sometimes fulfill a useful function, that of fact-accumulators. It is not to say that the Cyrus Townsend Bradys and Hilaire Bellocs do not sometimes serve an even more useful purpose, that of popular entertainers, and even instructors. It is simply to say that the best history is neither mere pedestrian fact-accumulation on the one side, nor mere pleasant writing on the other, but represents a fusion of facts, ideas, and literary grace in a single whole. This true history is of course not a resultant of two warring forces. It is a development on its own ground, and must hold that ground by hard fighting against the two extremes. History proper can give no quarter, for it will be given none; it must struggle desperately and constantly with both pedant and popularizer, and drive them back to the cobwebs on one side and to pulpwood on the other.

Van Wyck Brooks

Of the two enemies it is the pedant who is far and away the more dangerous, and who is chiefly responsible for the present crippled gait of history in America. His touch is death. He destroys the public for historical work by convincing it that history is synonymous with heavy, stolid prosing. Indeed, he is responsible for the fact that today a host of intelligent and highly literate Americans will open a book of history only with reluctant dread, and will shun like the plague any volume which contains a footnote. He does his utmost to warp and debilitate the young talent interested in historical writing. He exerts a steady pressure through every possible channel in the direction of his own deadly ponderosity. And in the resulting public neglect of history he finds not regret but delight; for history in his opinion should be the possession of a Germanic-minded few, a little knot of *Gelehrten* squeezing out monographs and counting footnotes.

The pedant is not only the more dangerous enemy, but is far and away the more difficult to dislodge; for he has found means in our university system and our learned societies to fasten himself with an Old Man of the Sea grip upon history. The popularizer has no foundation, no backing, save that which he wins by his own pen. If he writes well enough he may do some good or some harm—but he has only his talents to aid him. Moreover, his work inevitably finds its due level. News that an author is undependable, passed about by critics, newspaper writers, librarians, and college and high school teachers, gradually permeates the literate public. But in the last fifty years, since Parkman and Fiske laid down their pens, the school of pedants has gained control of a formidable arsenal of weapons. Though the touch of this school benumbs and paralyzes all interest in history, it is supported by university chairs, special foundations and funds, research fellowships, and learned bodies. It is against this entrenched pedantry that the war of true history will have to be most determined and implacable.

My initial use of names like Stubbs and Osgood was of course simply to furnish a recognizable label, and carried no suggestion that they were representative of the pedantic school. Compared with these eminent writers, the typical scholiast is Lilliputian. The two men named had remarkable gifts; the hallmark of the ordinary pedant is plodding mediocrity. These two men were highly productive workers, as most distinguished historians have been; the hallmark of the ordinary pedant is sterility. As he infests our colleges and universities (that being his habitat, for



Charles A. Beard

nowhere else could he make a living), he conforms to an all-too-familiar type. All honor to the numerous able and productive university men who are genuine historians and who try to reach a broad public! They would all agree upon a composite portrait of the pedant.

He has never written, or at least never published, a real book. Perhaps he was guilty in his so-called youth of printing a doctoral dissertation, but of that he has repented. He regards the man who writes books as self-convicted of superficiality; as not a "true scholar." At long intervals he prints an unreadable paper in some learned periodical. He may once in a decade excrete a slender, highly specialized, and to everybody concerned quite exhausting monograph. Apart from this his literary production is confined to an occasional spiteful review of some real historian. Fellow-pedants then gather in little knots and cackle: "Did you see what a fall Professor Dryasdust took out of Beard's latest book?" or "Did you see how Dryasdust made mincemeat out of Claude G. Bowers?" By this device—for morose jealousy of intellectual superiors is another hallmark of his type—our pedant labors to create the impression that if he were not too scholarly to rush into print, his own books would make Beard and Bowers look small. He adds to this impression by talking, Casaubon-like, of the great *opus* on which he is engaged as the decades drag by; an *opus* never quite finished. By long persistence on these lines a perfectly terrifying reputation for erudition and authority is built up. The cost in effort is almost zero; the return in the esteem of his fellows is enormous.

In other periods and countries pedants of this type did little harm; in America of our generation they have been able

(*Continued on page* 16)

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Edna Ferber's America

A PECULIAR TREASURE. By Edna Ferber. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

THERE is a good deal to be said for autobiographies which are written in middle life, in success, in good health, and in the spotlight. The taste of life is still good; anger and ambition are not spent; emotions are not reflected upon with too great tranquillity. Such recollections are written with another purpose than adding to the record. They express beliefs before it may be too late to act upon them; cite causes, and make suggestions.

This is such an autobiography. Miss Ferber says that it is "the story of an American Jewish family in the past half-century, and as such really a story about America which I know and love." That is what she says she started out to do, and, to some extent, she accomplishes her object. But so skilled a writer as Miss Ferber must know that for a story of a family, the proportions of this book are wrong. The genealogy is clear and interesting. Many of the events of Julia Ferber's brave and temperamental history are told, and Jacob Ferber is possibly the most vivid of the members of the family, because of his daughter's pity. But this is a story about Edna Ferber, and the tale of her family remains to be told.

The public will rush toward the book from many directions. Fiction writers will read it like gospel—and well they may for the frank story of developing craftsmanship, for authentic description of ways of writing, moods of writing, rewards of writing, fatigues of writing. They will find that, for all her frankness, she can no more put down the complete reason for her own success than she could give them a recipe for success of their own. Dramatists will read the book. Jews will read it, to uphold their faith and pride in their race, to revive memories of Jewish life in America, to share the exciting courage and warmth and devotion to family and race and work which is so true and apparent. It will be a very tonic book in that respect alone, and its title, with the verse from which it comes, will be quoted widely. The title is a little too heavy, a fine Scriptural phrase which is somehow not quite suited to the modern story of this successful, non-church-going writer.

Edna Ferber, William Allen White, and other journalists at the Republican Convention, 1912

Those who are anti-Semitic will read it, too, and occasionally, jarred by its sureness, its success, its indomitable vigor, they will probably say, "I told you so. This proves what I've been talking about!" And of course hundreds of Miss Ferber's friends, mentioned and unmentioned, will read it for the delight which comes in going back over those occasions and pleasures which spring by hundreds from the zest, the interest, and the affections of Edna Ferber's life, as well as from the progress of her talent. She claims that she hasn't known the great people of the world. That is one of the few inaccuracies in the book. She has certainly known the most important people of her craft and of her generation.

Anyway, here is the story, event after event, of a Jewish girl born in Michigan, who apparently loved America from that moment on, and who could never stop talking about it and writing about it. It's as patriotic a book as has been published in years, with very little flag-waving, and a deep love for the past of the United States of America. Miss Ferber is unconvinced about the future. It's an interesting travel book too, for Edna Ferber jaunted about a good deal and she saw things with a keen eye and met interesting people and ate good food. And, while as she says, she refuses to "tell all," she never leaves the events of a year in doubt, so that the faithful reader knows where she was between birth and 1939—at least as far as locale and piece of work in hand can mark the place.

But it is, in spite of its chronology, a curiously unsorted, unrestricted story for a writer like Miss Ferber, who says, in this very volume, that good writing should be astringent and economical. It's a big, generous book, strung together by her years, held together by interest in a woman who knew where she was going—up to now. Swiftly, colloquially, she puts down everything that seems to come into her head. Memories have no proper proportions and she knows that and doesn't care. Much of the narrative in the second half of the book is important only to the writer and her friends.

Even at seven, Edna Ferber was stage-struck

It seems as if in this book Miss Ferber is deliberately trying to avoid even as much artifice as comes in selecting material for a book. She avoids pretense and pose at every point. Speaking, for example, of "two thousand years of persecution," she catches herself up and says, "I find myself referring very often to that two thousand years of persecution!" She would consider it just as pretentious to slur or underestimate her own professional achievement. She has pride in that, the reviews, the sales, the money, the things she could do with the money. But without saying it or being sentimental between the lines about it, she shows that what she always liked best was the work, the new idea, the research. It is told with no false humility, and little vanity. Of course it is interesting to know that Miss Ferber thought that "So Big" would have no sale whatsoever, that she herself almost refused it publication. She wrote it anyway, because the idea possessed her. It proves again the one thing that all writers want to be sure of, that the best thing to do is to write what you want to write and not cheat, because the public is with you in the one case, and on to you in the other.

But Miss Ferber wanted to do much more than write about herself or tell of her professional work when she undertook this present volume. She wrote this book with the purpose, she says, of showing herself, her family, and her race against the American background. That is what Ludwig Lewisohn did in "Upstream." If this book is compared with that one, and the comparison is almost inevitable, the honors in sensitive and beautiful interpretation and fine prose must go to Mr. Lewisohn; the honors in vigor, in lack of bitterness, in humor, and in pride of race, to Miss Ferber. She doesn't idealize her race. They are all sorts and all kinds, she insists. She itemizes their virtues and faults. They are

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people, she concludes. If they are German Jews, they belong in Germany. If American Jews, in this country. They would, she believes, if treated without discrimination, quickly merge their racial differences. This is what the book argues; that, by being proud of race, diligent, useful, mixing with other people as human beings and not as Jews or non-Jews, choosing friends without snobbery and retaining them by merit and affection, a Jew could solve his chief problems. Miss Ferber's story is a shining example of how well it could be done. But it is saddening to see that she offers little present assurance to those who might try to follow her example. She writes that she doesn't envy youth, and states that the fact that youth is not to be envied today is the greatest indictment of the modern world.

The first part of "A Peculiar Treasure," when Miss Ferber is looking backward, when she is bringing to life the little girl carrying her father's lunch to the store, going to Mass with the "hired girl," watching the bulge of setting bread, is very tender. It is fine Americana. Our record of American provincial life becomes more and more complete each year, safe in our libraries forever, as we add books like "What People Said," "The Great American Novel," and now this story of a Jewish girl, to sit upon the same shelf. Miss Ferber shows too, with great fairness, how the moods of even small towns vary, and how anti-Semitism was strong in one and not in another; and that is something to remember, to check stupid generalizations about provincial life of the past or the future.

The fact that she wanted to be an actress, that the desire to act has always conditioned her life, comes out again and again. The love of the theater, inherited from her parents and fostered by them, is a strong thread all through the book. She tells that her mother used to put down in her diary, "Edna recited," time after time. The young Edna Ferber loved to recite, and she must have done it well or she wouldn't have done it so often.

In this book Edna Ferber again recites. And what a year to have her on the program! It's a stirring piece that she recites. And she brings recitation as close as it can come to good drama. Perhaps it is dated, this recitation. She, too, seems to think so. But in the reciting she comes close to doing what she has wanted most to do all these years, according to her own story, in personally revealing a character to a great audience. In this book she portrays dramatically an American woman, a writer, a Jew—her own character, driving, direct, generous, nervous, affectionate, marked by great talent, not quite like any other character you ever saw, on the stage or off it.

Margaret Culkin Banning is, like Miss Ferber, one of the most widely read women novelists of America. Like her, too, she comes from the Middle West, living in Duluth for a great part of the year.

The Meaning of Munich

WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE. By Hamilton Fish Armstrong. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. $1.75.

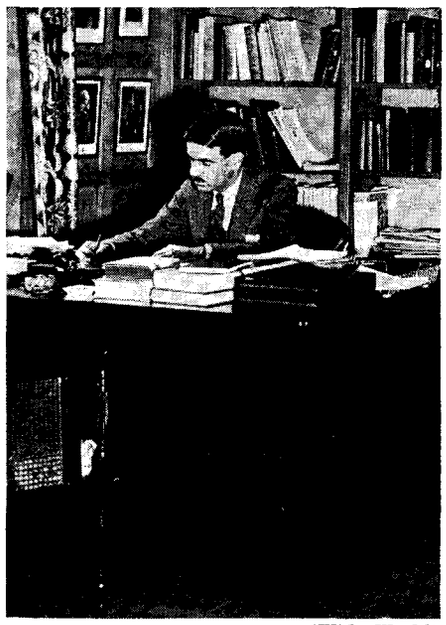
Reviewed by DAVID H. POPPER

AMONG the minor blessings stemming from the Anglo-French capitulation at Munich last September is one that will not soon be forgotten. For our great new tribe of "international relationists" it has provided an unequalled dramatic spectacle, a bone of intellectual contention, providing material for a whole host of books and articles. When the list is finally closed and the authors are rapt in contemplation of yet another crisis, "When There Is No Peace" will be remembered as one of the most important contributions to general understanding of the contemporary diplomatic scene. Clear, balanced, restrained, but powerful in its cumulative effect, it reviews the events of the Fascist *annus mirabilis*, the year which has just ended.

From the beginning the trend was obvious. In February Anthony Eden was sacrificed on the altar of the four-power appeasement; in March Austria went by the board while the Nazis assured all and sundry that Czechoslovakia had no cause for alarm; in May the quavering British and French leaders, their hand forced by a timely Czech mobilization, stiffened sufficiently to bring the German campaign to a momentary halt; in July the Runciman mission, like the Trojan horse, was prepared for wheeling within the walls; and throughout the summer the psychological terrorization of the West by the Goebbels propaganda machine mounted in intensity. In September came the dénouement, whose epochal consequences are too familiar to need recounting.

Mr. Armstrong centers his attention chiefly upon the crisis itself, from September 12, when Hitler addressed his frenzied cohorts at Nuremberg, until the meeting at Munich. By drawing upon his unsurpassed fund of background information regarding the European chancelleries, and by collating the existing documentary and journalistic material thus far brought to light, he has succeeded in presenting about as complete a record as one can compile in the absence of secret, archival sources. His examination of the deeds done in the name of the Munich agreement—that is, of the agreement in practice—merely strengthens the conclusion to which the American public has long since come: that Germany has now reduced Czechoslovakia to the status of a satellite power and has become master in Eastern Europe.

In all this there is little that is new. But the value of Mr. Armstrong's account does not lie primarily in its recapitulation of events. It rests, instead, in its keen interpretative approach. It rests in the acute introductory appreciation of the state of mind in Britain and France which enabled Hitler, by well-nigh perfect tactics and timing, to carry off an overwhelming diplomatic victory with the assistance of the defeated themselves. It rests in Armstrong's realization of the monumental ineptitude with which the French threw away a categorical assurance of British support against Germany, contained in the Foreign Office communiqué of September 26—an assurance which French diplomats had sought unceasingly since 1918. It rests in the clearly underlined, sinister implications of the disgraceful conduct of the French press in the face of just such facts.



(*Wide World*)
Hamilton Fish Armstrong

In publishing for the first time the text of the Czech response to the Anglo-French plan of September 19 Mr. Armstrong has revealed to the full the perfidy of the Western statesmen. But he has avoided the temptation—to which Thomas Mann, Frederick L. Schumann, and others have yielded—of assuming that the entire war scare of last September was a conscious attempt by their own statesmen to frighten the French and British populace into abandonment of Czechoslovakia. The capitulation, Mr. Armstrong appears to feel, was the upshot of blundering, of short-sightedness, of divided counsels, but not of Machiavellian malevolence. Yet it was none the less costly for that. Like Jeremiah of old, Mr. Armstrong points out that there is no peace, but only an armistice. We are left to conclude that it is a truce for which the democracies will pay through the nose.

David H. Popper, author of "The Puzzle of Palestine," is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

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The Polar Challenge

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES OF THE ARCTIC. By Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. $3.50.

Reviewed by MARIE AHNIGHITO PEARY

THE title of this book, while more or less provocative, is nevertheless a misnomer. For the author has solved each of the mysteries which he presents, in a scholarly and logical manner which would seem to admit of no contradiction. The lost colonies of Greenland; the fate of the Sir John Franklin expedition; the strange death of Thomas Simpson; the mystery surrounding the disappearance of André and his companions; and the missing Soviet flyers, each problem is dealt with in turn.

In each instance, there have been circumstances which have prevented the more inquiring minds among Arctic experts from accepting the final verdict. Perhaps the greatest dissatisfaction has been felt by Stefansson himself but, unlike his predecessors, he has done something about it. For years, in fact ever since the publication of his book with the revolutionary title "The Friendly Arctic," Stefansson has devoted himself to changing the idea of "Arctic terrors" in the mind of the general public. There may be some who feel that in so doing he has also removed the romance from Arctic exploration, but this is not the scientific attitude, and Stefansson is, first and foremost, a man of scientific mind.

Nothing could prove this more clearly than his method of handling the material in his present book. In each case, the reader is presented with all the known facts, logically arranged, the results of long and meticulous research. Stefansson clearly states his own conclusions and his own carefully thought out solution of each individual problem, but the facts on the other side are also presented. No effort is made to persuade or convert the reader. The results of years of study are fairly set forth, pro and con, and the reader is allowed to form his own opinion from the entire evidence. It is a tribute to the clear thinking of the author and his convincing way of presenting his case, that the reader will almost invariably agree with him.

Perhaps the most extraordinary example of what common sense and an open mind can accomplish is in the solving of the mystery surrounding the death of André and his companions. Surely there is no more dramatic episode in the history of Arctic exploration than the finding of the bodies of these three men, after forty-three years during which they had been given up as lying at the bottom of the Polar Sea. Not only were their bodies found, but their diaries and even their photographic films were recovered in such a state of preservation as to permit of their being read and studied in an effort to piece together the steps leading up to the final tragedy.

To the lay mind, the immediate assumption, when men are found dead in the Arctic, is that they have died from either cold or starvation. It is exactly this idea which Stefansson has been combating for years. Step by step, he proves by quoted extracts from the diaries or from the published testimony of the men who, in 1930, discovered the remains, that there was plenty of food in the camp; that the men were warmly clad, and that there was ample extra clothing within easy reach; that there was no evidence or record of illness. The details of Stefansson's investigation should be read with care for full appreciation of his deductions. Suffice it to say that he assumes nothing and makes no statement for which he cannot provide and quote his authority. His final verdict is death by carbon monoxide poisoning, a verdict in which numerous scientific men now concur. It is a simple and commonsense conclusion, amply borne out by the facts, but it is a conclusion which could only have been reached by a man whose guiding intellectual principle is to take nothing for granted.

The André problem is but one in a book of thrilling interest to all those to whom the Arctic is still a challenge, and to those not so familiar with Arctic history, it will prove a revelation.

Marie Ahnighito Peary is the daughter of the discoverer of the North Pole and a well-known lecturer and writer.

King Charles on the Run

ROYAL ESCAPE. By Georgette Heyer. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

WORCESTER lost, his Scots army sullen and inimical, Charles Stuart the younger faced the same fate that had overwhelmed his father. It was the block that awaited him, and neither Cromwell nor other potent Roundheads would have shown any softening towards mercy. But this Charles was a more wary prince than his father. Wit and waggery were too much a part of his nature to permit the meek surrender. He could enjoy cheating his enemies with almost the same relish that he could bring to gaining his kingdom. Escape was so difficult as to seem hopeless, but it was in Charles to attempt the impossible. From sanctuary to sanctuary he fled, living only from one hour to another in some priest-hole or Cavalier hideout. Everywhere he was recognized and the pursuit followed relentlessly. A retreat to Wales was checked, Bristol was reached after endless hardships and mishaps but failed to provide a ship, Southampton was equally useless. Finally, from what is now Brighton, a barque carried him off to France and safety. Well-wishers to the Royalist cause called it a miracle; after 1660 even the church could refer to it as "the Royal Miracle." Miraculous or not, the escape was a feat of daring such as no English monarch, with the possible exception of the fabled Alfred, has ever accomplished, and it provides the historical novelist with a story that whips up its own suspense with artless speed.

Miss Heyer is an adept at giving full-bodied reality to such a story. Casual readers who know her only in another role and who remember her only by such detective tales as "They Found Him Dead" will be prepared for the ease with which she develops her narrative, but they will be amazed at the learning which she displays so dexterously and so generously. She has taken her sources as seriously as would a professor of history, and has weighed all the evidence of those multitudinous tracts that, with the Restoration, celebrated Charles's miracle. Out of their confusion and their waywardness of detail she has built a plain, direct story which moves rapidly from one breathless episode to the next, each seemingly tragic and hopeless, until at last the *Surprise* with the king on board disappears into the gray of the Channel. It is Charles's triumph; he can laugh, as he doubtless did, at the unexpected joke the expense of which the solemn Cromwell could pay.

"He could enjoy cheating his enemies". . . (From the jacket design of "Royal Escape.")

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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William Butler Yeats
1865-1939

IN the death of William Butler Yeats in a small Riviera town at the age of seventy-three there passed a spirit from the world that will surely rank, to men of future time, with the spirits of Blake and Shelley. He published his first poem at the age of nineteen, his first book at the age of twenty-one; his literary life spanned the last decade of the nineteenth century and all the accomplished years of our own, since he continued writing and publishing almost until the last. His stimulus to a new Irish literature, including a new and vital Irish theater, was far-reaching in its effects. His influence extended to this country, which he first visited in his youth and later in his fine and honorable maturity. The greatest metaphysical poet of our age, fit to stand, in the blending of the sensual and supersensual in his verse, with the great John Donne, he also served his own land as statesman in her Senate, won for the Abbey Players a government endowment, championed divorce laws, the rights of free speech and freedom of expression, and in spite of seeing much of his dream for Ireland confounded by base political forces (that dream being for a country "both economically and culturally sound"), proved himself to the end her most high-minded champion. In the cause of Irish literature his services were inestimable.

An American poet and critic, Miss Babette Deutsch, in her excellent book, "This Modern Poetry," speaks of Yeats's extraordinary power to reconcile in one personality "sensualist and idealist, aristocrat and fanatic." "Whether he is turning a savage epigram, whispering a love song, naming over to himself friends and enemies among political martyrs, or dreaming a waking dream in a haunted tower, he writes a poem utterly self-contained. He is neither sentimentalist nor rhetorician, so that even when one cannot accept his 'vision of reality,' one is persuaded into a willing suspension of disbelief by the force of his art." And in commenting upon Yeats's approach to the fact of death, in his later work, she speaks of how "the bitter memory of unrequited love, the defeat of his most cherished dream, the loss of friends, the growth of enmities, the violence of civil war, of mob rule, the distresses of age" could not avail to "chill him into a desire for oblivion." He wrote:

I am content to follow to its source,
Every event in action or in thought;
Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest.

He was, as he said, "Blake's disciple, not Hegel's." The "magical associations" of "the word" early made him "attentive to symbolist doctrine." He created his own religion from Irish myth, from the theory of the French symbolists, from "the symbolical books of Blake and the philosophy of Hindu mystics." Eternally he exalted the imagination, yet with a "physical exuberance" that made even his most abstruse poems somehow strong in sinew. Anyone familiar with the work of the later Yeats must revolt against a recent obituary comment that could state, "Mr. Yeats was 'flowery' in almost everything he did," and place emphasis upon certain personal mannerisms that were a heritage of the nineties. Any artificiality that informed his earlier literary years had long ago left his writing, just as he cast off his "coat covered with embroideries out of old mythologies from heel to throat," and let his foolish followers take it to flaunt as their own. Through his finest love poems the unnamed figure of Maud Gonne, the Irish actress and revolutionary, moves like a living flame or "the dream a lion had dreamed." His mind, versed in all strange and recondite lore, evolved its own kind of spiritism, its own strange "system," stimulated by his wife's mediumistic abilities and automatic writing. But if few poets have ever drawn more richly upon the subconscious, few have faced more intelligently the problems of their own country or been more fearless in the pursuit of truth in two worlds. The presence of genius being as strange to the common run of men as the sudden appearance of a unicorn in the stock exchange, it is but natural that the poet should upon occasion have seemed very odd indeed to his fellows. But in spite of his love for all sorts of medieval fantasy, few have possessed an acuter insight into the depravity of men's minds or into the extraordinary potentialities of human nature.

Chiefly the many will remember the poet Yeats for beauty of language, but the wisdom of the ages was also in him. We have no space here to trace the progress of his art, through his many volumes. They remain a priceless inheritance not only to the Irish people but to the whole world. His prose was as fascinating as his poetry. He leaves us as one of the most honorable figures in English literature; one who as a boy dreamed through the processes of formal education, till that early headmaster in the Godolphin School at Hammersmith despaired of him; but one who developed wholly by himself a major literary ability. If they can ever be said truly to leave us, another great poet is gone.

W. R. B.

We Have Seen the Wind

BY MAY SARTON

WE have seen the wind and we need not be warned.
It is no plunderer of roses, it is nothing sweet.
We have seen the torturer of trees, O we have learned
How it bends them, how it wrenches at their rooted feet,
Till the earth cracks like a cake round their torn feet.

We saw the strong trees struggle and their plumes go down,
The poplar bend and whip back till it split to fall,
The elm tear up at root and topple like a crown,
The pine crack at the base—We had to watch them all.
The ash, the darling cedar. We had to watch them fall.

They went so softly under the loud flails of air,
Before that fury they went down like feathers,
With all the hundred springs that flowered in their hair,
And all the years, endured in all the weathers—
To fall as if they were nothing, as if they were feathers.

Do not speak to us of the wind. We know now. We know.
We do not need any more of destruction than all these,
These that were proud and great and still so swift to go,
Do not speak to us any more of the carnage of the trees,
Lest the heart remember other dead than these—

Lest the heart split like a tree from root to crown,
And bearing all its springs, like a feather go down.

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Letters to the Editor: *Sonnets, Presbyterian or Fascistic; A Forerunner of "Königsmark"*

The Presbyterian Sonnet

SIR:—About the sonnet. In one of your recent issues, Mr. Dudley Fitts remarks that Dr. William Carlos Williams "damns the sonnet form as 'definitely fascistic.'" Your reviewer expresses mild surprise, and adds that he himself has always "regarded the sonnet form as definitely Presbyterian." That the sonnet is also "feminine" is asserted by a psychoanalyst in that serious periodical, *Psychological Abstracts*.

Something suggests to me (the "damns" aside) that no one of the makers of these statements belongs, himself, to the group to which he blithely consigns the sonnet. There is about their pronouncements a definite flavor of I'd-rather-see-than-be-one. Perhaps I ought to hesitate to admit that together with the sonnet I belong definitely to the second and third groups, Presbyterian and feminine, and if Dr. Williams had used in a cooler moment the word "conservative" in place of "fascistic," perhaps to the first one also. Earnestly I am trying to see the sonnet form, about which I know little, in those three terms about which I know much. It is difficult to do.

My own idea of the sonnet is three serpentines and two toe-turnings, or, two figure eights and two flying leaps, according as one fancies the English or the Italian form. (I am not a figure skater.)

MARY CHRISTIE WEYER.

Washington, Pa.

Königsmark

SIR:—In connection with the review in your issue for January 7, of the historical novel, "Königsmark," by A. E. W. Mason, it is somewhat curious that the reviewer makes no reference to a French novel of conspicuous success and merit, under the same title—"Königsmark," by Pierre Benoit, which was one of the best and best-sellers and internationally widest-sold (by translations into pretty much every current literary language) fictions of a novelist, not always sustaining as brilliantly his far-flung reputation. The book has been filmed two or three times, with not less favor all over Europe. True, in Benoit's novel the very familiar history of Sophia Dorothea of Zell (not "Celle," as the reviewer names it)—who was later, during her almost life-long imprisonment, styled "Countess of Ahlden"—is not made the central stuff of action. For, instead, we have a romantic young Frenchman, during the World War of 1914-1918, utilizing his knowledge of the final tragedy of the palace of Herrenhausen, to discover a somewhat similar crime, committed in a German capital and *Residenz*, where he happens to be employed. Certain scenes in Benoit's story, working out the secret parallel, are of vivid dramatic quality; and the noble young heroine, Aurora von Lautenburg, is an unforgettable personality.

Unless I am in error, there has been more than one treatment in German fiction of the Königsmark romance. It resembles curiously that other fatal love-drama of Count Struensee of Denmark and Queen Carolina-Matilda, born a royal princess of England; on which affair recently has been published an Italian novel, by the Milanese writer, Carnevale.

EDWARD PRIME-STEVENSON.

New York City.

"Do I have to pay time-and-a-half for overtime?"

Rilke

SIR:—À propos Louis Untermeyer's review of M. D. Herter Norton's "Translations from the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke," (*SRL*, December 24), and William F. Luebke's letter (January 14):

Hans Bethge, in his "Deutsche Lyrik seit Liliencron" (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker Verlag, 1921), devotes thirteen pages to Rilke as compared with twenty-one to Liliencron.

This little volume (291 pages) has also a photograph of a bronze bust of Rilke, by Fritz Huf.

HALSEY STEVENS.

Mitchell, S. D.

Millais's St. Agnes

SIR:—It wasn't, I think, a case of "Houghton Mifflin fidelity," nor one of their artists, who did the illustration to "St. Agnes' Eve," praised by Mr. Quercus.

The original was drawn by Sir John Everett Millais, for the famous Moxon Tennyson, that one of the notable examples of the very beginnings of the delightful wood engravings of the famous sixties; a book that boasted not only 18 designs by Millais, but others by Rossetti, Holman Hunt, etc., and mixed its pre-Raphaelites with earlier conservatives like Maclise, Landseer, and others.

Forrest Reid, in his invaluable "Illustrators of the Sixties," says:—". . . the incomparable Eve of St. Agnes, which may not be the most interesting as a picture, but as an ideal illustration is the most perfect thing in the book."

Houghton Mifflin were not the only ones to borrow—though I think they bore a record for paying for their borrowings—the old Tennyson I grew up with was the Crowell red-lined edition—and had the same illustration.

It's a wonderful feeling to catch anybody in the *Saturday Review* napping—if I really have.

M. E. CROCKER,
Librarian.

Lock Haven, Pa.

Pitcairn

SIR:—After Orson Welles's broadcast of "Mutiny on the Bounty" recently, with its attendant comment on the condition of the Pitcairn islanders, I followed an old idea of looking up just which Pitcairn the island was named for. I haven't his first name yet but he was a younger son of Major John Pitcairn "of the marines," killed on the British side in the battle of Bunker Hill in 1775. Midshipman Pitcairn sailed on the *Swallow* with Capt. Philip Carteret and in the midst of a round-the-world exploring trip full of the most terrible hardships, was the first to sight the island on July 2, 1767. The *Swallow* finally arrived at Spithead March 20, 1769. Midshipman Pitcairn must have been born under an unlucky star as he sailed again Sept. 20, 1769, on the frigate *Aurora* for India, and the *Aurora* disappeared completely after leaving the Cape in December. William Falconer the poet was purser on the *Aurora* and also lost. Young Pitcairn was a brother of David Pitcairn, eminent London physician.

Why don't you persuade some publisher to bring out a modern edition of Brydone's "Tour of Malta and Sicily" with a life of B. and some of the amusing circumstances of its publication—comments of Dr. Johnson, Hume, and others? Brydone was a great-great-great-grandfather of Bertrand Russell who would probably have access to the papers required.

LILLIAN HOKIN.

Hueneme, Calif.

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Great Fantastic

OUIDA: A STUDY IN OSTENTATION. By Yvonne ffrench. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by
KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD

"HER [Ouida's] aggressive baiting of the English middle classes, her self-glorification, her attitudinizing, her intolerance and her vulgarity, were all symptoms of Byronism in its most exaggerated form."

Thus Miss ffrench, in her very interesting and valuable portrait sketch of Louise de la Ramée, begins with a misconception. There is a tradition in English life and letters loosely termed "Byronic," which never fails, in any generation, to find exponents. As a matter of cold fact, many of these so-called Byronic figures are not truly Byronic at all. They lack not only Byron's genius, but Byron's common-sense—of which he had a good deal. No biographical portrait of Byron could properly be called a "study in ostentation." Ouida is one of those English characters whose extravagance stems rather from Beckford than from Byron, and her mantle falls eventually (as Miss ffrench does not deny) on a Marie Corelli. On a Firbank, if Miss ffrench prefers; but surely Miss Corelli came nearer inheriting Ouida's vast public.

"Who, it may be enquired, reads Ouida now? The reply is that she has never ceased to be read by a large section of the working classes, and that of all Victorian best-sellers her books are some of the hardest to obtain in the second-hand shops." Yet, in her time, she was read by everybody: by peers and men of letters as well as domestic servants.

Fashions have changed, and in spite of Ouida's own cynicism, the hard-boiled young could probably not, now, take her "femmes fatales" seriously, or be at ease in her maëlstrom of superlatives. Those interiors of the rich and proud, supported by pillars of malachite and porphyry, hung with violet velvet, crowded to suffocation with flowers—that welter of paintings, statues, Nubian boys, Circassian girls, chocolate, narghilehs, champagne, billets-doux, baccarat, and incredible jewels—leave one, now, breathless in the wrong sense. Ouida, alas! had no taste. The passions of love, intrigue, hatred, revenge, which animate her characters, are as uncontrolled as the luxury of her palaces. Ouida, according to her present biographer, was better in her tales of animals and peasants than in her expositions of the great world. Perhaps. I shall not go back to "A Dog of Flanders" or "In Maremma" to find out. Leave me, please, with my memories of "Guilderoy" and "Chandos" and "In a Winter City." Ouida, for all her extravagances, had moments of genuine, unforced power, and

Ouida. Reproduced from one of *Punch's* Fancy Portraits

her sense of drama, as Miss ffrench rightly declares, was strong. Being unable to locate the third volume of "Princess Napraxine," I recall, meant real frustration.

We may well leave Ouida's fiction, then, until the taste for her does return—as Miss ffrench thinks it may. But Ouida herself was more astonishing than her heroines, and Miss ffrench's biography is not only fascinating but important. Important because it adds Louise de la Ramée to the little group of great fantastics with whom Britain ever and anon vivifies her stodginess. With all possible allowances for capital differences within the group, we may say that she belongs with Beckford of Fonthill, with Lady Hester Stanhope, with Lady Ellenborough, with Burton, and with Blunt. She never, save in imagination, roamed further than Italy; but she managed to live there as strangely and significantly as in the desert.

And Ouida, like most of her fellow-fantastics (I will not say Beckford), while she condemned convention, kept her moral passions at white heat; and like them, though vain beyond decency, she was willing to endure insult, injustice, and privation for the sake of a cause. Having spent money as crazily as a Chandos, she ended with nothing but her dignity, her pain, and her dogs—for whose sake she literally deprived herself of food. These violent alternations of luxury and hardship, banquets and starvation, do not disturb the great fantastics as they disturb other men and women. Ouida belongs among those brilliant, uncomfortable souls. They have their own glory. But, in all fairness, let us not call them Byronic.

Katharine Fullerton Gerould, long a noted contributor to the magazines, is the author of numerous works of fiction and belles lettres.

The Road to Hitler

INSIDE GERMANY. By Albert C. Grzesinski. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1939. $3.50.

Reviewed by HENRY C. WOLFE

IN December, 1931, Police President Grzesinski of Berlin drew up an order forbidding Adolf Hitler to make public statements and ordering his deportation from Prussia as an "undesirable alien." This order, which might have been so decisive in its effects upon history, was, the author tells us, opposed by President von Hindenburg. Hitler was allowed to continue his agitation and his climb to power in the Reich and in Europe.

"Inside Germany" is autobiography and a close-up of recent German history written by a man who held important positions under the post-war Weimar Republic. Of humble family, Herr Grzesinski spent his early life in a struggle against adversity. By the outbreak of the World War he had become Secretary of the Metalworkers' Union at Offenbach-on-Main and Kassel. A life-long Social Democrat, he immediately came to the fore when the Imperial regime collapsed. His successive offices included that of Minister of the Interior of Prussia.

This readable book, written in German here in America, and translated into English by Dr. Alexander S. Lipschitz, is at once a defense of the Weimar Republic, an explanation of that democracy's fall, and a spirited, and entirely logical, attack upon Nazism. Indeed, the volume is temperate throughout. And even though the reader may feel at times that the author is a little hard on some of his colleagues, the wonder is that one who has lived through such harrowing experiences could be, on the whole, so impartial.

In this volume we have a first-hand account of the factors which destroyed the Weimar democracy. Its pages reveal the adverse effects upon the German Republic of the "senseless treaty of Versailles," and the policies of the Allies who did not hesitate to "take drastic action against the Weimar Republic." These same nations were to surrender time after time to Hitler. The French-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr, the author tells us, "gave rise" to the Hitler Putsch (1923). The Ruhr invasion was "catastrophic" for the Republic. He says that when Allied concessions were finally made to the German democracy, they "came too late."

While the Allies were bearing down on the Republic from the outside, the reactionaries were striking at the democracy from the inside. The election of President von Hindenburg, Herr Grzesinski believes, was "the turning point in Germany's post-war democratic history." In January, 1933, Hindenburg gave Gregor Strasser his "word of honor as a Prussian

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general that I shall never permit this Bohemian corporal [Hitler] to become Chancellor." Less than a month later, Hitler became Chancellor by Hindenburg's invitation. The President, incidentally, emerges from the book in a very bad light.

As for the Reichswehr, the author calls it "the dagger in the heart of the Republic." He recalls a project of 1920 in which von Seeckt, Reichswehr chief, suggested that Germany should resist the Allies, smash Poland, and establish contact with the Soviet. The Republican Government said no to this plan. The Reichswehr became "a state within the state," a reactionary force composed of men who opposed democracy. But the criticism in the book is not confined to the extreme Right. The extreme Left comes in for its share of blame, too. For the author charges that the Communist Party was the "mischief-maker of German politics." By opposing the Social Democrats and often voting in support of the Nazis in the Reichstag, the communists "perhaps more than anybody else, contributed to the breakdown of Germany's democratic institutions."

Herr Grzesinski describes the Third Reich and its methods, with special emphasis upon the importance of propaganda in Hitler's foreign relations. Again and again he points out the irony of the contrast between the Allied pressure upon the Republic and Franco-British retreat before Hitler. He believes that Munich was an incalculable disaster. The book ends upon a pessimistic note and an appeal to all supporters of "justice and law, humanity, democracy and peace" to oppose Nazism.

Henry C. Wolfe is the author of "The German Octopus." He has had wide experience as observer and participant on various European fronts.

The Genius of the Brontës

THE MIRACLE OF HAWORTH, A Brontë Study. By W. Bertram White. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1939. $3.50.

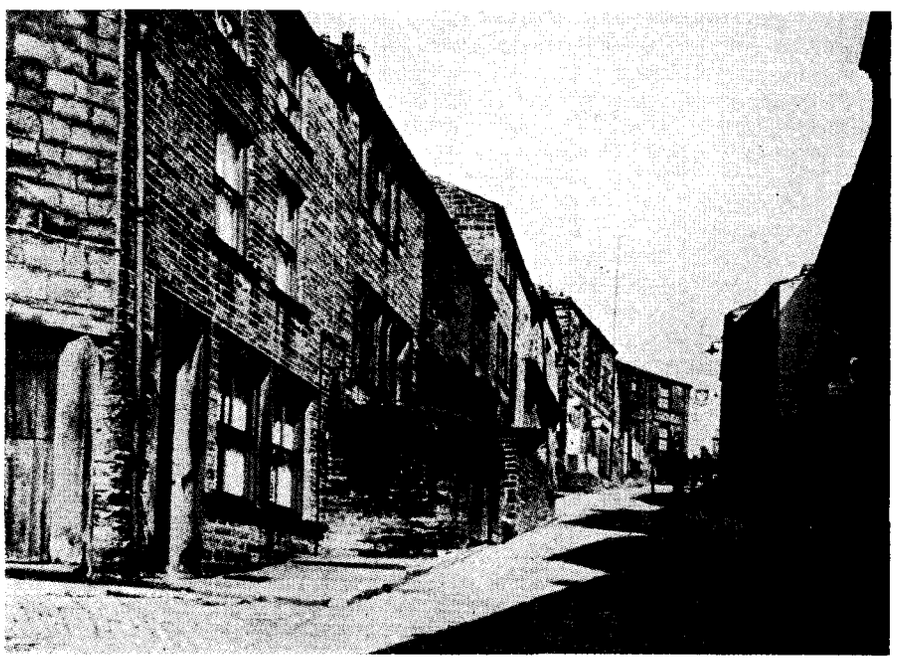
Reviewed by WILLIAM CLYDE DEVANE

ONE may say in no unkindly spirit that there was no necessity for this book save the necessity innate to Mr. White. His purpose is to tell once more the story of the Brontës in such a way as to set right misconceptions which have existed since Mrs. Gaskell's biographical classic upon Charlotte Brontë. Mr. White wishes especially to vindicate the Reverend Patrick Brontë, the father of genius, from the charge of harshness; to exhibit Charlotte's devotion to duty and her unswerving purpose; and to clarify the authorship of "Wuthering Heights." On these points specifically Mr. White seems to me to add little that the judicious had not already surmised from the many recent books upon the Brontës, but his book does have the total effect of setting the familiar scene and the well-known characters in a kindlier light than hitherto. It is easy to see that for Mr. White this was a labor of love, but his love is not always judicious; it produces all of the virtues and some of the defects of his book.

The chief defect is that Mr. White makes too large, too partisan, and too uncritical claims for the Brontës. One may truly say that the novel of passion could never be the same after 1847 when Charlotte published "Jane Eyre" and Emily published "Wuthering Heights," and one may agree wholeheartedly that the Brontës brought flame and force to the English novel such as none of their masculine contemporaries were capable of bringing. Indeed, when Emily in her poetry touches, as she occasionally does, her strain of grandeur and gives us an example of immortal expression and insuperable courage, one is ready to capitulate and call her one of earth's great spirits. One may surrender in the same way, but not quite in the same degree, to Charlotte when, her affections deeply engaged, she writes of her sister's love for the moors. No other English women could have written those things, and few men could have bettered them. These things are well and fair. But in making these admissions I am much a laggard to Mr. White's praises. He suggests the comparison of Charlotte to Joan of Arc in achievement; and in the realm of genius he does not hesitate to link the Brontës with Michelangelo. It is true that he reduces the comparison by adding Stevenson, Keats, and Francis Thompson to the same disparate group. In my opinion Mr. White is at his critical worst when he attempts to vindicate the claims of the Brontës to first place among all women writers from Sappho to Virginia Woolf. A short paragraph to such diverse ladies as Fanny Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, Mrs. Shelley, Mrs. Browning, George Eliot, Christina Rossetti, and Emily Dickinson, and it is all over with them. I should be loath to call attention to these distortions if they were merely detached incidents. But they are symptomatic of a state of mind, for, though he often writes well, Mr. White often writes naïvely and uncritically. One must reserve something for Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton, not to mention Byron who is more in the Brontë regions. Then, too, some of the ladies mentioned above have their qualities, though they are not the same as the Brontë qualities.

One might mention other faults and feel churlish in doing so. The truth is, it seems to me, that Mr. White's love of the Brontës and his knowledge of their work leads him to follow their story with sympathy and insight where more critical persons have often failed. Had he known the work of Miss Ratchford on the Brontë juvenilia he would have written fuller and more significant chapters at the beginning of his book; had he remembered more of English literature he would have written a better informed criticism. He is at his best when his story is told from the inside, when he is following the emotions of Charlotte and Emily in their quiet, but imaginatively eventful, lives. Here he is often very good indeed.

William C. DeVane, formerly head of the English department of Cornell University, is now dean of Yale College. He is the co-author of "Charlotte Brontë's Legends of Anglia," and author of "A Browning Handbook."



Street in Haworth village

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Cottonville

AFTER FREEDOM: The Portrait of a Community in the Deep South. By Hortense Powdermaker. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

MISS POWDERMAKER is an anthropologist who secured her experience beyond her education in New Guinea. Also and more important to this book she is a good reporter. But it was as anthropologist that she went to Mississippi to study the culture of "Cottonville" with particular emphasis upon its Negroes who live across the railroad tracks. Reader reference to the same census reports which Miss Powdermaker used indicates that Cottonville is Indianola, county seat of Sunflower county. And any familiarity with the Mississippi Delta and the Whites and Negroes who grow cotton on it will convince a reader that Miss Powdermaker was one carpetbagger who looked for the facts and got them right—only occasionally she has gotten them a little better than right.

The suggestion is implicit that she has penetrated the jungle. It is there: the jungle of conventional and romantic Southern white misconceptions about the Negroes who every day enter the white world without any corresponding entry of the whites into theirs. But certainly this is not Southern, Southern as it is. One half (the top half) not knowing how the other half lives is a familiar state. And certainly not all people, South or North, are still lost in the attitudes which were indicated by the white folks' answers to Miss Powdermaker's questionnaire about the Negroes. Of course, not all middle class Southern people understand the Negro. A great many of them do not understand themselves. But Miss Powdermaker is not the first white child ever to cross the chasm. Good will and good sense have led others before her, and I suspect, that good will and good sense took her further toward the understanding of Indianola than any of the special tools of anthropology.

But beyond a little pretentiousness about the magnitude of her adventure and the new scientific certainty of her discovering, Miss Powdermaker has done an excellent job. She has drawn with a new clarity the patterns of Negro living. And as excellent reporter she has collected a body of anonymous Negro personalities of every class and condition who, out of their own mouths, give point and meaning to all the attitudes and customs of the race.

I had the feeling that Miss Powdermaker was never quite able to see so clearly the Whites of Cottonville. Indeed, it seemed to me that she was sometimes caught in one of those Southern prejudices which middle class white people and Negroes share in her consideration of the Poor Whites. There are no folk, I think, not even the Negroes, who have ever been so much misunderstood and so much condemned.

The truth is that the railroad tracks which divide the living of the races is too sharp a dividing line. In Cottonville and in all the other hard-bitten and half-dead little Southern towns all the people, white man, black man, big man, little man, are caught in such a complexity of difficulties and relationships that understanding of one group depends upon understanding of the whole living of them all. Obviously such a wide problem was beyond Miss Powdermaker's study. But she has drawn an honest—in many respects penetrating picture—of important aspects of that living. It adds valuable material to the wider knowledge upon which full understanding must be based and upon which sympathy for all depends.

Jonathan Daniels, editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, *is the author of "A Southerner Discovers the South."*

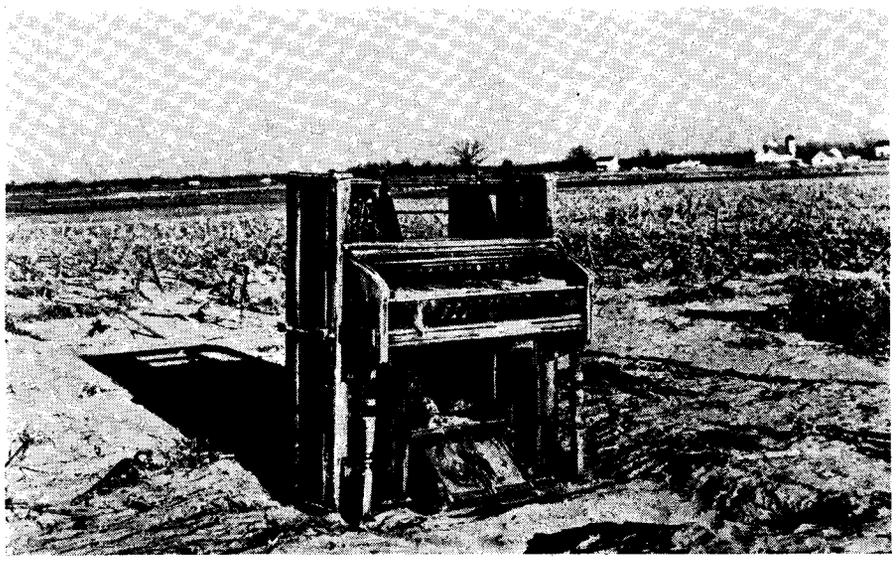

Photo by Russell Lee from "U. S. Camera 1939"

The War in China

UNCONQUERED. By James Bertram. New York: The John Day Co. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON

THERE is a panoramic quality about this study of the first year of the war in China as well as the convincing touch which comes from things seen at first hand. In June, 1937, the author was in Japan, where he noted the first reactions to the Marco Polo Bridge incident. Twelve months later he was back in Japan and able to assess the changes which a year of warfare had induced in the Japanese people. During the interval he had witnessed the Japanese capture of Peiping, had visited Tsingtao and Tsinan, and then gone inland to Sian. From there he had traveled northward to Yenan, center of the Eighth Route Army, and eastward into Shansi province, where he spent several months with communist units that were campaigning against the Japanese invaders. On his return, he had stopped at Hankow, Hongkong, Dairen, and Peiping before revisiting Japan.

The author has made effective use of the opportunities afforded by his extensive itinerary. His narrative, marked by an easy style, imaginative insight, and a wealth of concrete detail, is consistently fascinating and informative. He has the rare gift of presenting his experiences so realistically that the reader lives through them as a participant. A few well chosen strokes, fortified by a remarkable interview with Mao Tse-tung, give the atmosphere, activities, and political significance of Yenan in October 1937. The inside view of guerrilla operations in northern Shansi, as carried on during the first winter of the war, is the highlight of the book. Even at that early date the Chinese peasantry was being rapidly organized into a solid unit of resistance. Bertram traveled with guerrilla units that were often in sight of Japanese forces but were themselves virtually immune from attack. Japanese troops and supply convoys, on the other hand, were being constantly ambushed and were suffering far greater casualties than the guerrillas.

This general picture of the fighting in northern Shansi is filled out with vivid illustrative detail. Ho Lung and Hsiao K'eh, the communist commanders on this front, tell their life stories and are shown both in action and behind the lines. The diary of a Japanese officer, killed during an engagement in the northern passes, is translated in full. News from the outside world comes in over the radio at staff headquarters. All fits into a coördinated and efficient scheme of mass resistance, against which even the highly mechanized Japanese armies are at a hopeless disadvantage. The problem of winning a decisive victory, the crucial test for Japan's high command, is revealed in its true proportions by this book.

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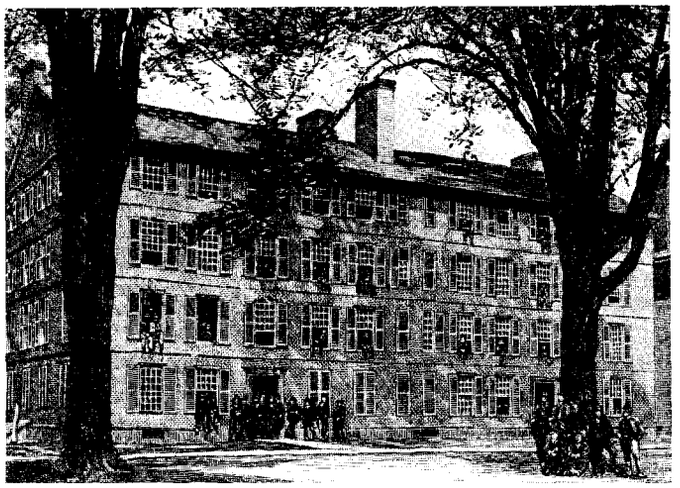
BOOK PREVIEW

Yale '09

BY LEONARD BACON

This week *The Saturday Review* presents a section from Leonard Bacon's autobiography, "Semi-Centennial," to be published by Harper & Bros. The chapter which follows describes life at Yale shortly after the turn of the century, and contains lively vignettes of some of Mr. Bacon's classmates, including Sinclair Lewis.



South Middle, Yale University, about 1908

LIFE at New Haven in the ultra-violet decade was in some ways simpler, in some ways more stereotyped, and by no means better than at present. I am reasonably sure that the run of the mine undergraduate today is a higher animal than our average thirty years ago. He has to be. It is harder to get in and to stay in than of old. Also almost before he enters he knows that the huge choice of possibilities that lay before us has been disconcertingly narrowed. We could lie on our oars in calm seas and drift comfortably toward innumerable enchanted islands. There aren't any calm seas any more. And the fortunate islands seem to have vanished in volcanic disturbances. At least they do not appear on the charts of any admiralty. The unfit, the ignorant, the dull, not infrequently in our time found themselves holding simply elegant cards at the poker table of fortune. That I think we knew or suspected and it did not diminish a sense that the four years were meant to be carefree. But even a Princeton Sophomore knows better now, when he sees the able and intelligent thrown out of jobs on their ear. It is reasonable to ask whether the undergraduate today is to be pitied or congratulated because of the loss of Paradise.

One came, one saw, one was accepted or ignored by the "social system," the hierarchy of fantastically secret societies. Timidly one beheld "far off three mountain-tops, three silent pinnacles," "Bones," "Keys," "Wolf's Head" overshadowing the lesser bulk of "Elihu Club" and the mere foothills of the fraternities. Of the three hundred and twenty men in my class, I venture to guess that only two Chinamen and a couple of Negroes had given no thought to these features of the moral landscape, and one of the Chinamen actually made a successful ascent of one of the lower summits. The other Chinaman, an able, brilliant, and high-minded man, was abandoned to his non-Aryan fate. We endeavored in a somewhat sour manner to be jovial about the system. Arthur Baker's limerick about the junior fraternities is still remembered:

Alcibiades was Alpha Delta Phi
And Rameses the Great was Zeta Pi.
And though Shylock was a Jew
Still they took him in Psi U.
But Socrates was Beta Theta Pi.

Four or five years ago I was exquisitely surprised, when a sort of rejoinder to this quip, this time about the Senior Societies, was quoted to me by an undergraduate, intact, handed down by oral tradition, just as it was written twenty years before. It does not run so easily as Arthur Baker's, but it has the extreme merit of mentioning explicitly the utterly unmentionable, and I believe I wrote it myself.

I saw Aristides taken into "Bones."
And I hailed the glad event in joyful tones.
But when Alcibiades
Had the nerve to throw down "Keys,"
And Pericles went "Wolf's Head," there were groans.

Anyone who ever witnessed an old-fashioned tap-day, when the applause or hisses of the mob were a striking part of the drama, will perceive that the picture, however feeble, is realistic enough. And anyone who has seen the track-captain of his year weep without shame when he at length realized that the hand of fate was not going to be laid on his shoulder, will I think agree with me that the order of things stood, as it still stands, in need of modification. In this as in more important matters the minor pleasures of the few depend to an unnecessary degree upon the disappointment of the many.

Certainly I was not above such ambitions, and quite as certainly I had not been a week in New Haven, before I knew that I should never do more than drink from one of the lesser chalices, which in time came to pass. Happily for me I had a real interest in literature and was determined to be a poet, cost what it might. And this vainglorious desire which had the merit of being honest and real, saved me from a lot of tremulous intrigue and from the immoderate heart-burning of those who thought only of the Junior-year lottery. Also that desire threw me almost at once into delightful contact with a group of sympathetic young men, Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors, who had similar tastes. Before us the *Lit* appeared, a glorious goal more desirable, believe it or not, than any quantity of Bones. Monthly we besieged the portals, bearing things we hoped were unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

The *Lit* at that time had an office in the basement of White Hall, where the editors, portentous Seniors, sat in season to skin and flay. Cabalistic marks beside their initials on our manuscripts indicated how little they thought of ewe-lambs. And for once in his life, the sucking author was exposed to criticism which, however incompetent, was as honest as he ever gets. Blinded by no consideration except their own likes and dislikes, the young gods sat in broken-down chairs around a circular table, and in turn took the neophyte on horrible intellectual excursions. With splendid brutality they abused ineptitude or sentimentality, or in more favorable mood suggested changes or omissions. They were not learned young men, but for real assistance to the ambitious, they were unrivaled, for besides being an editorial board they were a sort of skeleton public as well. Rank idealists, with no axe of whatever kind to grind, they praised or they sacrificed as the spirit moved them. And up to the limit of their abilities they told you why. And presently when the 1907 board put on the purple, there was one among them.

The cadaverous, pale-freckled face and tomato-soup-colored hair of that singular Junior, who was to be the first American to win the Nobel Prize for literature, could not be ignored then any more than now. "Harry" Lewis was as different from the correct young types around him as Sauk Center is from Tuxedo. He had none of their artificial constraints and far more real dignity of nature. He stormed and he damned, but again he might roar

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you as gently as a sucking-dove. And his hates and his loves were genuine and never compromised by ulterior and clandestine desires, although there was nothing he would not do to assist fellow-sufferers among the rocks and briars of the lower slopes of the two-horned mountain. His classmates, I believe, had viewed him with alarm, had been cruel with respect to his irascibilities which were passionate, and had ignored his talents which were obvious to every "heeler" of the *Lit*. Our admiration, I feel sure, was not unpleasant to him and there was quite a group of us who instinctively endeavored to do him honor. This reflects some credit on us, for Harry did not belong to any society and never would, which does not add anything to the prestige of the classes of 1906 and 1907. He was apart from that kind of thing, and in one way from the college, for he did not even live in it. He had a room in a cheap boarding-house outside the pale of the university, where I perused a typed volume of his poetry four inches thick, and discussed with him the merits of an equally fat book by an author who never won the Nobel Prize. The unfortunate's name was Swinburne, to us at the time a figure who meant liberty and the casting-off of fetters.

Harry was a scarlet thread in the drab of my Freshman year, and after I returned from my enforced year abroad, in my Junior year. I never have had a better time with any man than when we sat over welsh-rarebits and beer at the Hof-Braü, and disposed of the past and the future with great impartiality and equal authority. Poetry was his love, and I am still astonished at the direction in which his fate took him. It was clear even then that he was a comer, but in 1905 I should have predicted for him the lyric, perhaps the epic, but not the photographic. In a satire twenty years later I adjured him to return to his early altars. Furthermore I believe he will before he dies. He came into the world not to turn a candid camera on Babbitt, but to revel in something as old as the Tale of Troy and as new as the aeroplane. If he finds it, he will create out of his unabated natural forces something that will force us to think at once of "War and Peace" and "The Three Musqueteers." And his sunset will be as surprising to the world as his dawn was to me.

I have a last vignette of him in New Haven. Harry in his Senior year, 1906-1907, had given up college in mid-term, for the delights of Upton Sinclair's Utopian experiment, Helicon Hall. Strange as it may seem to Marxian youth, many of the staunchest reactionaries they know were rampant socialists then, a fact that should give Marxian youth pause. Upton Sinclair appointed Sinclair Lewis furnace-man in the New Jersey Utopia, which led Harry to form a low opinion of that belated Brook Farm. He returned disillusioned in the autumn of 1907 after the graduation of his class, to round out his degree and become once more the delight of the slaves of the *Lit*. We had long walks and talks. And a strange fantasy of his about the sphinx became a symbol for me which has been dominant in my thought, if I may call it thought, these thirty stricken years. I was a candidate for the *Lit* (last place) and everything hung on whether or no one final poem were accepted before the election. Harry Lewis, my delightful roommate Harry Beers (also a candidate but a sure one), and I went down to read the bulletin of the chosen, which the Board would post in the window of the *Lit* office late that night. It was blowing a gale and black as pitch in the Berkley Oval, and many lucifers went out before we were certain that "The Ballade of the Golden Horn" was safely on the list. I have never known a moment of greater triumph, and no other Nobel Prizeman has struck so many matches in my behalf.

Though an enormous and irreplaceable part, Harry Lewis was by no means the whole of existence in those pleasant years. Beers, with whom I roomed for two of them, was as interesting a man as one could hope to know. He was gentle and had inherited his father's fine, delicate, distinguished speech. He loved German literature and was always quoting Wilhelm Meister for his own purposes. My tastes have never dovetailed better with those of any man. To me he was a piece of pure good fortune. And his sympathy and sense of humor (how often those two go together!) made 342 White a pleasant place.

Al Loomis I never saw much of except at the dinners of the "Pundits" in Senior year. But his was an immensely powerful mind, which has been conclusively demonstrated in two unrelated fields. He first attracted my attention when before my delighted eyes he proved, on the principles of the Baconians, that a poem of Dunbar's, who died in 1519, had been written by Francis Bacon, who wasn't born till 1561. Since that singular performance he has found time to be a successful banker and a first-rate physicist, and by that I don't mean a bloody amateur attracted by the fairy tales of science.

I saw more of a most attractive Jew, named Robert Moses, who already had given striking proof of the courage by convention denied to his race and, by a convention as absurd, attributed to the Aryan. He was automatically excluded from the social privileges reserved for the inheritors of the Great Tradition. But he made himself a position of power in our little world, by the same methods of straightforward outspokenness that have made him a figure in the nation. I was touched and amused when a writer in the *New Yorker* a year or two ago described how Moses shocked front to front against Walter Camp, dictator of football, and defeated him with great slaughter, to the advantage of swimming. To an undergraduate, a Jew, the victory remained. It was as if Walt Disney had overthrown Hitler, which may happen yet. That the imbecile anti-semitism of half-grown boys should have cramped his form in any respect is no compliment to our collective intelligence. He of all men needs to worry least on the point, when twelve million call him blessed today. Is it too much to hope, with a recent writer in *Harper's Magazine*, that a hundred and twenty millions may do so presently?

Wholly different but quite as exciting was Leonard Kennedy. The leit-motif of his powerful nature was "'satiable curiosity," which, if it be connected with a rational mind, is of all qualities most charming. There was nothing whose mystery was not interesting to him, even after he had plucked out the heart of it. It is no wonder to me that he was the first man to give an intelligent account of the half-mile-high cataracts of British Guiana, or that he tore down a mountain inside the city limits of Rio de Janeiro. The engineer, the furiously active reorganizer of countless ruined companies, never lost his passion for literature in all its forms and parts down to the very mechanics of prosody. And I have discussed metrics with him in the "Down Town Club," while from adjoining tables ancestral voices prophesied terrible things about Cerro de Pasco and Great Northern Preferred. He himself pointed out on that occasion, that such a subject had in all probability never been canvassed in those precincts before. Golf, the development of the oversea airlines, trout-fishing, South American bonds, dog-breeding, first editions, there was nothing he was not mixed up in and could not be exciting about.

Their name is legion in my own and other classes. Francis Riggs who came through the Russian Revolution to be assassinated in Puerto Rico, Jim McConaughy now presiding to perfection over Wesleyan University, Kim Townsend, the only honest-to-God faun I ever knew, Tom Beer with the mind that glittered and penetrated till it hurt, Wayland Williams, poet, novelist, painter, and still to me most sympathetic of men, provided me sport-royal. I hope I gave it back in kind.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 253)

E. A. ROBINSON:
THE THREE TAVERNS

. . . Through pangs and ills and desperations
There may be light for all. . . .
The few at first
Are fighting for the multitude at last.
. . . . . .
Say what you feel while you have time to say it.
Eternity will answer for itself
Without your intercession.

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The Bold Stroke

SLOW WALL, Poems New and Selected. By Leonora Speyer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $2.

Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM

WHAT distinguishes the poetry of Leonora Speyer is its boldness. Amongst poems of today that are hesitating and tentative, hers are remarkable for a direct seizure of the subject and a swift presentation of the image. The men of the bold stroke are the regnant figures for this poet. There is Byron—

In Athens street his image stands
Pale as in life, the bold head bent,
The lofty brow and insolent
Receives its laurel from the hands
Of the Muse leaning.
Where Marathon looks down
Through year the crumbles into year,
Echoes a step that is his step,
Resounds his opulent, aching song,
Beneath Erectheum's porticos,
Intent and tall, the Maidens peer
Dreaming he comes and goes.

In "The House of Calvin" she watches the bold stroke through a sort of consternation, and in the end proclaims it justified—

Upon the altar dark and stripped,
He laid the Book, the great bound
Word.
Manifest evidence of the Lord:
Where once was light and chanted
prayer,
Thurible swinging up the air,
Rose a chill sound, the voice
loud-lipped
Of mighty Calvin preaching there,
And like a hammer rose and fell
His voice, propounding line on line,
Driving them home.

The poet goes through the ordeal of this iconoclasm—an ordeal for one "who loved the lovely things of God," but she is exalted by the boldness of the deed that places the Book "on the naked altar stone," and looking from that bareness she can see the mountains—

And like the psalmist towards his hope
I lifted up mine eyes.

The spiritedness of the Greek fragments in Pompeii makes the poet exultant so that she cries out—

If these be fragments, tell me, what is
whole?

The same spiritedness is in what she watches today—the gulls—

Whose round, unflinching eyes
Meet like a challenge the heavy-lidded
sun.

And the hills "that barricade the stars," and "the bird that dares the day." Not all the poems, however, deal with such spirited things nor have the boldness of approach I have noted. "Slow Wall" is a collection made from various volumes, and it has a noticeable variety. The exquisite "Southern Cross," for instance, hymns something fallen and shattered.

And there are the ten sonnets described as "of a not unusual situation" in which reticence and quietude are the notes. A lady sits prepared to serve tea to the regular caller, the man who will never know that her heart is given to him.

There she would stay, each desperate
goal in sight,
Awaiting nothing with a certain grace;
Her time was come for loving, and a
light
Made record of that fact upon her face.

Psychological penetration goes with great aptness of expression in these sonnets, which make a brief narrative.

This poet has an unusual power of dramatic narrative. It is shown in "Ballad of a Lost House," "Monk and Lady," and in "The Ballad of Old Doc Higgins." In these ballads we are impressed with Leonora Speyer's ability to realize memorable backgrounds. Against the rococo of eighteenth-century Bavaria moves the lady who so passionately loves the young nobleman who has joined a religious order. Against the dourness of New England goes the strayed mermaid whom Doc Higgins shoots, "gormin' up his troutin' pools," and against the light and warmth of the rich London house goes, unseen, its expelled owner with her memories. Spare and vernacular, the Ballad of Old Doc Higgins belongs to New England. There was Old Doc Higgins settling down to a peaceful morning's fishing, and there was a Mermaid:—

Naked to the waist and sassy! Wavin'
to him, swimmin' by, shameless
hussy;
Or just singin' as she floated, kind of
high,
No tune at all (and he noted how her
tail would flash and swish),
Gorry, how she scared the fish! Old
Doc Higgins on the shore
Yelled and swore.

So Doc Higgins shot the mermaid and, for his crime, was dragged under the water by her sisters. With its variety and vitality, "Slow Wall" is a stirring collection of poems.

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What's the Matter with History?

(*Continued from page 4*)

to do immeasurable damage to right concepts of historical writing. Some of them hold chairs, even in our oldest and largest universities; and hence they have the training of young men and women who study history and try to write it. They can warp and destroy the talent of these novices, and in numerous instances have done so. They teach ambitious spirits to look for petty monograph subjects, drill them in their own plodding, barren discipline of footnotes and bibliography, and kill the vital spark. They gain control of the research funds that might provide some leisure for really talented men. They try constantly to fasten an autocratic, intolerant grip upon societies founded with broad and generous aims, like the American Historical Association, and to reduce them to strictly academic and narrowly "learned" bodies. They try constantly to fix the same fell grip upon the existing journals of history. The younger periodicals, like the *Mississippi Valley Review*, have kept fairly well out of their clutches; but despite the gallant efforts of several managing editors, including the present incumbent, they have given the *American Historical Review* the imprint of their contracted and esoteric aims. Apart from its reviews, that publication has been not a magazine but a learned work of reference issued in quarterly installments. Its present able head is improving it. But as the most execrable specimens of literary criticism in print can be found in the *Journal of the Modern Language Association*, so the worst examples of how history should never be written can be discovered in past files of the *American Historical Review*.

The result of all this is evident if we but look about us. By whom is the real history being written today?—by whom has most of it been written in recent years? To an overwhelming extent, by the men and women farthest removed from the deadly touch of the academic glossologists. A younger generation of university men, I am happy to say, is springing up and manifesting a healthy impatience with pedantry. They are being encouraged in not a few colleges and universities by older men who are finished literary craftsmen, and who believe that history is defeated and worthless if it does not gain a popular following. But by far the larger number of our best historical writers are still to be found outside academic lines. Nearly all of those with a genuine public, with a following at all comparable to that achieved by Prescott, Parkman, and Fiske, are outside. Charles A. Beard, trained as a political scientist and not a historian, has not taught since World War days and was always far more a publicist than a university scholar. Claude G. Bowers, James Truslow Adams, Marquis James, Van Wyck Brooks—they have kept as far from the droning voice and envious pen of the mere scholiastics as did Beveridge or Captain Mahan or Henry Carey Lea.

With all due respect to the great body of excellent work that over any extended period is produced by academic historians; with all due respect to the men of broad views and high talents in academic seats, from Samuel Eliot Morison on the Atlantic to Herbert E. Bolton on the Pacific, we must admit that our colleges and universities are not setting the pace. It is being set by another group. Ask the well-read American, possessed of some real critical faculty, to name our best living writers of history and historical biography. He will suggest a few university scholars, of course. But he will name far more of the outsiders. In addition to the figures I have just listed, he will think without great effort of such writers as Tyler Dennett, Walter Millis, M.A. De Wolfe Howe, Douglas Freeman, Ray Stannard Baker, Burton J. Hendrick, Constance Rourke, Bernard DeVoto, Constance Lindsay Skinner, William Allen White, Ida Tarbell, Roger Burlingame, Frederick L. Allen, Miriam Beard, Mark Sullivan, Henry Pringle, John Chamberlain, Herbert Agar, Philip Ainsworth Means, Charles Warren—but why go on? The list simply cannot be matched in the academic world. And yet this world offers the leisure, the facilities, the special knowledge that theoretically should make it the pulsing heart of our historical work.

Still another consideration is to be noted. History proper is constantly importing new talent from the field of the popularizers. Young workers with native gifts often begin amateurishly and train themselves (for they have nobody to mistrain them) into good historical writers. A promising book like Hugh Russell Fraser's "Democracy in the Making" this year may, despite all blemishes, presage a new figure of importance. But once a Pangloss, always a Pangloss. History proper recruits nothing from that bleak quarter. Who enters *that* road, and has not the foresight to turn back at its first milestone, is lost forever.

Since the school of pedants is the principal enemy, and since they are so well entrenched, what is to be done? It is not enough to say that time will take care of the problem. It has not done so in the past. This pedantic area of the historical field is well organized, while the great main body of historians is not. The best writers are essentially individualistic. They are busy with their own imaginations and ideas; they have no time to think of societies, reviews, funds, and the other appliances of scholarship. They are often scornful of them—the more so because the pedants have gained so much control over them. Most of the writers listed above have never once attended a session of the American Historical Association. They spend no time thinking of rights, privileges, and petty possessions; the pedants have nothing else to think about. And thus the pedantic school maintains and even extends a grip that has been disastrous to history in the past and will continue to be disastrous in the future.

The unescapable fact is that organization must be fought with some degree of organization. Some body should be created to unite the best of the university writers of history—those really interested in its presentation in attractive literary form—with the best of the outside writers. Such a body is needed. At present most non-academic authors have no touch with any historical organization. They do not want any; and yet they would profit by it. A new society such as I have described, literary rather than scholarly in intention, might coöperate with and strengthen the American Historical Association. It could encourage those members who strive to hold the pedants within bounds; who wish to make the Association a propagator of historical information along broad lines, not a petty learned society intent on footnote erudition. But the new organization could have important aims of its own. It might do much to promote the ideal of sound history in attractive garb, to encourage and protect those who believe in this ideal as opposed to pedantry or excessive popularization. It might help to create a broader reading public for history.

But above all, an organ is needed for those who believe in history as literature. Nothing would do so much in this country for the right kind of historical writing as a general monthly magazine devoted to it; a magazine offering a wide variety of accurate historical material, written with enough grace, color, and verve to be interesting to the lawyer, the doctor, the college student, the high-school teacher, the intelligent layman everywhere. In a nation so huge as ours, it is deplorable that practically no market now exists for even the best-written of historical articles. Most monthly magazines have a rule, formal or informal, which excludes historical matter from their contents. For this rule we must partly blame the pedants, who have filled the public with such a terror of history; we must partly blame the political and sociological preoccupations of our generation. But a distinct place exists for a popular historical magazine. It would do much to educate Americans in the dignity and fascination of their own past, and in the historical backgrounds of many a world problem of today. It would do equally good service for a union of scholarship and literature in the historical field. Such a magazine is certain to come in time, and if well edited, is certain of a resounding success.

Allan Nevins is professor of history at Columbia University and an outstanding exception to his own characterization of the academic historian. He has won a wide general public with his lively chronicles of American annals.

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Horizons of Building

CHANGING THE SKYLINE. By Paul Starrett. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by EDWIN R. EMBREE

IT is recorded in holy writ that the first skyscraper in the first great city —the tower of Babel—brought confusion of tongues and scattering of the people. From that time forward the unity and solidarity of rural cultures have always been shattered when they grew into city civilizations. Country people speak a common language not only in their tongues but in their beliefs and ceremonies and customs. The unity of this rural culture gives way in cities to diversity of habits, disregard of religious traditions, individualism, a babbling confusion of tongues. Cities have reached their apogee in modern skyscrapers, great towers of steel and concrete rising into the clouds, housing thousands of people on a few square rods of ground space. The architects and builders of these modern babels are moulders of our modern civilization.

One of the men who for half a century as architect and contractor has been in the very thick of modern sky building is Paul Starrett, who has now written an autobiography. Born in Kansas and reared in Chicago, he served with the historic Chicago architects, Burnham and Root, and then moved over into contracting with the George A. Fuller Company, of which he was president during the boom days, and finally headed his own company, Starrett Brothers. As a young draftsman he worked on plans for the buildings of the Chicago Fair of 1893. As contractor he erected buildings that made American history during the surging decades just past: the Flatiron Building in New York, first of the modern steel skyscrapers, Macy's efficient department store in Herald Square, the beautiful Lincoln Memorial in Washington, the Pennsylvania Station and the Pennsylvania Hotel, the National City Bank (interestingly enough built on a platform over quicksands), the McGraw-Hill Building of steel and glass, and finally the Empire State Building.

But one looks in vain in this autobiography for any discussion of modern architecture, any incisive treatment of the fascinating problems of engineering and materials, any understanding of the social background that has given rise to our city sky lines. Instead there is salesman's talk of getting contracts, losing commissions, making friendships to insure future business. In reporting the Empire State Building, a glimpse or two appears of the great drama of structural steel: The problems of shrinkage of steel columns of such tremendous height, allowances that had to be made for swaying in the wind of the tall needle (arranged in this case by cross joints of corrugated lead in the stonework), the problems of getting the workers up and down the great heights, arranging temporary restaurants for them on higher and higher floors as they climbed upward toward the sky. But even in this greatest of skyscrapers, Starrett gives the bulk of the record to landing the contract, quarrels with Al Smith over commissions, labor disputes that broke out on other contracts his firm had at the time in Cincinnati and Newark.

Giants of the business world walk through the pages but they do not speak. They babble only of prices, jobs, mergers, deals. If one judged by this book, one would be forced to believe that big business men in America were absorbed in the trivia of commercialism while all unknown to themselves they were developing startlingly fresh materials and forms, setting the mould of a new civilization.

Facts for Facts' Sake

THE BIRTH OF THE OIL INDUSTRY. By Paul H. Giddens. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by E. D. KENNEDY

THERE is a great deal of information in this story of the first ten years of the American oil industry, but from the standpoint of the general reader documentation has had too much the better of selection. The book deals largely with the wild-cat period following Colonel Drake's initial oil-well at Titusville, Pa., in 1859, but breaks off in 1870 with the industry still uncentralized and the Rockefeller period not even foreshadowed. The trouble is that Professor Giddens not only stays within ten years of Titusville but also stays within ten miles of it. The reader is given a detailed description of well after well—who drilled it, how much oil came out of it, how long it continued to produce. On almost every page one meets a new group of characters who are never seen again, but though the names are different the actions are repetitious.

It should be added that the limitations of the book were set by the author, who set out to describe the early days of the oil-rush largely through the medium of contemporary records. A professor of history at Allegheny College, he finds in the early days of the Pennsylvania oil-fields a subject of special interest. The general reader, however, is likely to find the succession of names, dates, dimensions, and distances a little wearying, and the romantic aspects of the pioneer period hardly emerge from Professor Giddens's recital. The scope of the study also precludes any treatment of the subject from an economic point of view.

A long introduction by Ida Tarbell is unfortunate in that it summarizes, in considerable detail, almost precisely the events which Professor Giddens then relates in excessive detail.

The AMEN CORNER

"Oh Wellington! (or 'Villainton'—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways:
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten, she will laugh the same),
You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'"

We have always sympathized with Byron's rather savage views, of which the above is the mild prelude, on the Iron Duke. (You will find them in "Don Juan,"[1] or more conveniently in *The Oxford Book of Light Verse,*[2] chosen by W. H. Auden.) Nevertheless we are delighted to hear the Duke speaking for himself in *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington, 1831-1851,* by Philip Henry, 5th Earl Stanhope, which the Oxford University Press has just published in the *World's Classics.*[3] Philip Guedalla writes the Introduction, and he says of Lord Stanhope that "in a high degree he performed for Wellington what James Boswell's notebooks performed for Samuel Johnson." Here is first-hand information on European affairs a century ago, in a time very like our own.

It is also, in the little blue volume, a pocket footnote to the latest volume in the *Oxford History of England—The Age of Reform, 1815-1870,* by E. L. Woodward.[4] Each volume in this series by various authors is written and published as a separate book. Mr. Woodward's is one of the best. It is one of the most lively periods, and he is a writer who holds your interest from beginning to end, as you know if you read his *French Revolutions.*[5]

The pattern for revolutions seems to have been set in the seventeenth century. *Six Contemporaneous Revolutions,*[6] by R. B. Merriman of Harvard shows how even then agitations occurred throughout Europe at approximately the same time.

But before we wander too far from Wellington, we are still excited about *England's Years of Danger, 1792-1815,*[7] in which Paul Frischauer dramatizes the struggle with Napoleon in a series of excerpts from letters, despatches, diaries, reports of conversations, cabinet minutes, memoirs, giving a kind of first-hand March of Time, or as a lady bookseller said to us "Crime File on Napoleon."

Conversations with Wellington was published on the same day as a new title in the Trollope section of the *World's Classics, Can You Forgive Her?* in two volumes.[3]

Another *World's Classics* favourite of ours, Constance Holme, is also appearing now in ordinary library size volumes in the *Oxford Book Shelf*[8] series. *The Things Which Belong,* popular in the *World's Classics,* has just appeared in the larger format. THE OXONIAN.

(1) *Byron's Poems.* In the *Oxford Standard Authors.* $1.50. Write for complete list. 114 Fifth Avenue. (2) $3.00. (3) 80c each. Write for list of nearly 500 titles. (4) $6.00. (5) $3.00. (6) $2.50. (7) $2.75. (8) $1.50.

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Indian Leader

TECUMSEH AND HIS TIMES. By John M. Oskison. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

THE story of Hannibal against Rome, wrapped in an Indian blanket. The great movement into the Northwest Territory has grown to heroic proportions in our history as the winning of the West; but the actual record was in some respects so discreditable that it moved Jefferson to "tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." It is quite easy for any writer who takes even a half-way view of the proceedings of the pioneers to enlist his readers' sympathies on the side of the Indians. Mr. Oskison takes slightly more than a half-way view—the only white man in the book who emerges with a shred of reputation is Anthony Wayne—but he is not beyond his rights, for he is producing the biography of one of the leading actors, and it is incumbent upon him to justify, or at least to explain, what his man did.

And he did plenty—formed a great Indian confederacy that reached from the Lakes to the Gulf, rooted it in a basis of combined religious fanaticism and hope of present material gain, held at bay for a long space the young republic which could bring to bear many times his resources in man-power and overwhelmingly more than his resources in mechanical skill, changed the living habits of a race. With a few more years of peace Tecumseh might have won his game but his prophet brother had made the fatal promise that the faithful should be immune to bullets, and when William Henry Harrison produced a premature clash of arms, the new religion which was the pivot of the whole combination died with those of its followers who fell at Tippecanoe.

At this point the defect of an otherwise excellent book appears. Things are a little too simple. Mr. Oskison presents the last years of the great chief's life as a kind of duel with Harrison in diplomacy and war. This is no more accurate than to call the last years of the Second Punic War a duel between Hannibal and Scipio; rather, both Harrison and Africanus were special organisms called forth from an amorphous body by external stimuli, unable to function without the pressure of that mass behind them. Captain Croghan and Richard Mentor Johnson, whose roles were as important as that of Harrison himself in bringing Tecumseh down, barely walk across the stage; Daniel Dobbin, who was very important, is not mentioned; and the comment on the Prophet is offhand. The personal and political interrelations of all these persons were in the last degree complex and interesting, but there is not much about them here.

Still, this is admittedly a somewhat carping criticism which is practically a request for a book twice as long. The difficulty of all Indian history is the lack of information on which to base it; and if Mr. Oskison has not altogether overcome this difficulty, he has gone farther than most in producing an excellent piece of biography from what must have been the most exiguous and disappointing materials.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
SOME BURIED CAESAR *Rex Stout* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Orchid show gets Nero Wolfe to upstate N. Y. town, murder—involving taurine champion—holds him there.	Ingenious plot, Nero's eccentricities. Archie Goodwin's wise-cracks keep story on Stout's best level.	Unbeatable
ANTIDOTE TO VENOM *Freeman Wills Croft* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Elderly British pathologist found dead from apparently accidental snake-bite. Slight discrepancy piques Insp. French, and hunt is up.	Run-with-the-hare and hunt-with-the-hounds affair, beautifully constructed, well characterized, and dexterously elucidated.	Peerless
THE CHAMELEON *Harry Stephen Keeler* (Dutton: $2.)	Mysterious gentleman with different moniker on almost every page indulges in fantastic semi-criminal high-jinks in Mid-West.	You know what it's all about—maybe—on last page, and the rest is sheer—but, dammit, interesting—lunacy.	Delirious
THE GREAT GAME *H. C. Bailey* (Crime Club: $2.)	Dead bat in belfry where untimely bells tolled for skull-cracking sets R. Fortune on grim trail of triple murder.	Evil doings in English hamlet keep rubicund Reggie busy plumbing mixture of motives and bringing megalocephalic killer to book.	Enthralling
DEATH BOARDS THE LAZY LADY *Ruth Darby* (Crime Club: $2.)	Pleasure cruise of gay theater-movie group to Virgin Islands marred by murders which test skill of insular detective.	Scandinavian serenity of sleuth Christensen blessed relief after hysterical emoting of other characters. Solution has questionable moments.	Passable

The Romantic Soldier, but Not the Dictator

NAPOLEON, SOLDIER AND EMPEROR. By Octave Aubry. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

TWO years ago American readers were provided with a translation of Octave Aubry's "St. Helena," a study of Napoleon's last years. It was an impeccable narrative, smooth, graceful, justly informative. It divulged no new evidence, it suggested no fresh interpretation of the tragic and anti-climactic six years that closed the Emperor's life; it was simply a vivid and honest retelling of the familiar story in an idiom attuned to the ears and minds of the 1930's. Its popularity has had the inevitable effect of inducing its author to capitalize on his former success with a complete biography of the man whose decline he had so adroitly chronicled. The result is a book which reproduces the merits of its predecessor—a succinct and accurate account of Napoleon's career, nicely modulated to contemporary taste. It is neither so brief as to exasperate the glutton for detail, nor so long as to frighten the mentally indolent. It is well planned and well written; it misses no opportunity for dramatic effect, and it includes not a single tedious paragraph. It is, in fact, a painlessly readable life of Bonaparte, but so are several others which have by no means been outmoded.

So much for the book's merits. On the surface they are considerable. To make already overworked materials into an exciting narrative, as M. Aubry has done, is a feat not to be too lightly condemned. But anyone, other than the most undemanding of readers, is likely to ask for something a little more solid than narrative dexterity, if he is to read for the *n*th time the saga of Napoleon's victories. Some current of interpretive thought is needed to give vitality to such a book, some concept of history which does not relegate Clio to the company of mere reporters, no matter how brilliant they may be.

Napoleon was a dictator, one of the most extravagantly successful of all dictators. We are today forced to be interested in dictators. Whether we admire them or hate them, we cannot possibly refuse to consider the political theories of which they are the manifestations. We cannot fail to be anxiously curious about the conditions which beget them and about the ends towards which they direct their energies. Much that is psychologically pertinent to such thought resides in the story of Napoleon, but from M. Aubry's treatment we should never know it. For Napoleon the dictator he has neither approval nor disapproval. Napoleon the dictator simply does not exist. He is replaced by a romantic soldier and benevolent ruler around whom a mawkish sympathy has thrown a mantle of undiluted glory.

C. D. Abbott is librarian of the University of Buffalo.

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The Upper House

THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES. By George E. Haynes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1938. *2 vols.* $8.50.

Reviewed by LINDSAY ROGERS

GLADSTONE once described the Senate of the United States as a "remarkable body—the most remarkable of all the inventions of modern politics." The statement is still true but the adjective may cut two ways. Observers may think of the Senate as remarkable in its successes or remarkable in its failures. In either case, the most powerful upper chamber in the world merits the extended and detailed consideration which it receives in Mr. Haynes's two large volumes.

Under preparation for a number of years, they have obviously grown by accretion. Comprehensive, even encyclopedic in their nature, they deal with every phase of Senatorial activity—not only with the spectacular functions in connection with foreign affairs, nominations to office and investigations, but with minor matters such as the ventilation of the chamber, the mortality rate in comparison with that of the House of Representatives, and the allowances for mileage and stationery.

Here in ample detail are the incidents —some of them dramatic—which throw light on the manner in which the Senate does its work and uses its powers. Here is a history of the ways in which Presidents have gotten along and have failed to get along with the body which probably has more *amour propre* than any other legislative chamber in the world. The role of the Senate as a high court of impeachment receives extended treatment. Mr. Haynes is concerned not only with corruption, alleged or real, which brought about the use of what someone called the most cumbersome gun in the Congressional arsenal, but he pays fastidious attention to fine points of procedure. Despite its scope and its excessively factual character, the work is not dull. Mr. Haynes has a feel for the humorous and the picturesque. He has filtered the facts through a sympathetic and trained intelligence.

Some years ago Mr. Haynes published a monograph on the election of senators. Then the country was tremendously concerned by the controversy over whether the choice should be by popular election rather than by the state legislatures. The latter method had permitted seats to be purchased. The Senate was spoken of as a millionaires' club, and in that era of pre-war "progressivism" indirect election seemed undemocratic. So a constitutional amendment provided for popular election. Mr. Haynes (and many observers agree with him) cannot see that the character of the Senate has changed greatly. Scandals there have been in connection with campaign expenditures. Demagogues are certainly no less numerous. Whether the level of ability has risen and fidelity to the national interest has increased are wide open questions.

Mr. Haynes has written a treatise and not a tract for the times. He limits himself to expounding and does not bother to exhort. Hence there are few suggestions concerning what changes, if any, Mr. Haynes would propose to make in the position that the Senate occupies in the American constitutional scheme. Other representative systems of government deliberately exclude an upper chamber which can be as powerful and as independent as the Senate of the United States frequently is. Everywhere the task of representative institutions is to act so promptly and so intelligently that those who advocate totalitarian regimes of one sort or another will have little that is serious to complain of. A powerful upper chamber makes for delay but it may also make for greater intelligence. Some comfort may also be derived from the fact that in the two crises of the World War and of the 1933 depression, the Senate surprised many observers by displaying little of that *amour propre* which they expected it could never conceal, and by abandoning personal and factional attempts to obstruct.

Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia University, is the author of several books, including "The American Senate" and "Crisis Government."

Courtier and Poet

SIR WILLIAM D'AVENANT: Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager. By Arthur H. Nethercot. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1939. $4.

Reviewed by ALLARDYCE NICOLL

IN the fall of the year 1650 the English Admiralty received news that one of their licensed privateers, Captain John Green, had captured "a Gunder bark of Jersey." Presumably the worthy naval officers imagined this to be some new kind of armed merchantman; had they been inclined to the reading of contemporary literature they might have guessed that what Captain Green had captured was the author of "Gondibert," none other than Sir William D'Avenant, servant to King Charles II in exile. Later examination revealed the truth, revealed, too, the fact that the seizure of D'Avenant's ship had cheated Maryland of a new lieutenant-governer, for D'Avenant was carrying secret orders to take over the control of the colony from Lord Baltimore. This was a stirring time, when poets perforce became men of action and men stood leagued to fight for unthroned king or usurping parliament.

Through the tortured course of political events in the seventeenth century Sir William D'Avenant steered an exciting course, and that course has been entertainingly told by Professor Nethercot. His book is a genuine contribution to our knowledge of life during this time. D'Avenant himself touched many facets of the age. He was a courtier and so associated with events of high political import; he was a poet and so related to nearly all the literary men of his generation; he was a playwright-manager and so responsible for much of the theater's fortunes in the mid-century; he was, too, something of a buffoon, one whom contemporaries never ceased to laugh at because an unfortunate escapade had left him minus a nose. Even when he lay in the Tower and the House of Commons debated whether he should die, a contemporary newspaper reported that "when it was put to the *Vote*, some *Gentlemen*, out of pitty, were pleased to let him have the *Noes* of the House, because he had none of his own."

Professor Nethercot is to be congratulated both upon the thoroughness and upon the freshness and vitality of his biography. D'Avenant deserved such a meticulous study as this, for was he not the reputed son of William Shakespeare and did he not, in his age, contribute towards saving John Milton from a traitor's death? No man could wish for greater honor.

Allardyce Nicoll is chairman of the department of drama at Yale.

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The New Books

Fiction

A GOOD HOME WITH NICE PEOPLE. By Josephine Lawrence. Little, Brown. 1939. $2.50.

It was said of one of Sinclair Lewis's books (we think it was "The Man Who Knew Coolidge") that he had transferred his character to the page in all of his unadulterated dullness. Miss Lawrence has achieved this same dubious feat in "A Good Home with Nice People," which is a book about the troubled relations between suburban women and their maids. It is made up of long, interminable dialogues in which the women are saying how difficult it is to get a good girl these days, and how they don't appreciate a good home with nice people, etc.—and also in which the girls are saying how these women expect you to work like a dog for next to nothing and no time off, and don't they think you're human, too, etc. Now this is no more interesting on paper than it is in the next compartment on the train, nor does it in fact seem to make a novel. The subject is not really discussed seriously from any recognizable social angle, and has no direction, unless we consider the farcical ending, in which the girl ties and gags her mistress "because she wouldn't stop talking," as a climax. The book is simply one long headache about the servant problem, and will probably have a special nostalgic appeal for those to whom this headache is a personal matter.

N. L. R.

THE GENTLEMAN WITH THE WALRUS MUSTACHE. By Guy Gilpatric. Dodd, Mead. 1939. $2.

The thing that has always left us transfixed with wonder is the superhuman constitution of Mr. Colin Glencannon, chief engineer of the S.S. *Inchcliffe Castle.* We have long ceased marveling at his exploits with the brass knuckles—at his Elizabethan gift for repartee and at his unparalleled Scottish shrewdness. But how that organ which in other men is called the stomach withstands the constant assault of spirituous liquors to the amount and variety which he consumes will always remain one of the great mysteries of modern fiction.

The admirers of this musty old sea-dog who pops up at regular and frequent intervals throughout the year in the *Saturday Evening Post* must easily run into the millions. You find him in this new group of adventures at peak form. His spirit was never more valiant, his chicanery never more astute, and his humor never more exhilarating.

R. S.

TODAY IS ENOUGH. By Ruth Lininger Dobson. Dodd, Mead. 1939. $2.50.

This is the story of Judy, who marries John. Hers is a city background with vague and naive overtones of luxury and social gaiety, and he is a young minister, who talks about people's "lovely homes." He takes her to his new parish, a small village somewhere in the Middle West, and their adjustments to marriage and life take place. It is an ingenuous, wholly undistinguished little novel, at its best with the farm and village people, at its worst with social problems, the brittle, brittle world of the gilded rich, and the more subtle forms of grammar. One guesses that the author is part of the exact group of women for which she writes, and that should make a happy combination.

F. W.

A VISIT TO PAY. By Isabella Holt. Bobbs-Merrill. 1939. $2.50.

Standing with unreluctant feet where the cat and kitten meet, Towny, Chicago debutante, is the most entertaining figure in Miss Holt's often extremely entertaining book. Towny's generation consider it *vieux jeu* to drink, swear, or rebel; they are time's revenge on the clumsy, naive war generation who thought themselves such devils and who now seem to their children merely messy. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a Victorian child—especially a child who like Towny is Victorian on the surface only, and has manners but no scruples!

Martin and Peg, however, though they belong to Towny's generation, are very different, for they are sensitive and desperately loyal. But even Martin and Peg are too intelligent to be comfortable to themselves or their parents: they see too much and they have not enough experience to give them charity or cynicism to make them stop caring.

Thus Peg's mother, Mrs. Morlock, who has to deal with them all, is baffled. She is one of those beauties whom a capricious Providence enjoys marrying to ugly and clever men by whom they invariably have clever and dish-faced daughters. Assured of her rightness through consciousness of her beauty, Mrs. Morlock really wants to be a good mother, and a good aunt to Martin. But she is always being checked in her generous impulses by the memory that the world seemed to promise her perfection in return for the pleasure her face gave it; and she finds herself losing the trump without winning the game.

The dark and luscious Katharine, Martin's step-mother, does better with the younger generation because she is too egotistical to let it bother her. She struggles with an air of greatness, a New England conscience, and a flair for the third rate, and ends by deciding she had always wanted too much, and accepting life and an inferior husband. The conclusion is spoilt by the feeling that Bertram was much the best thing she'd ever captured; so that she ended as obtuse as she began.

Thus, with all her intelligence and wit, Miss Holt cannot make her ending compare with her brilliant beginning. The real pleasure of her book is in the characters of Peg, Martin, and Towny, and in the vivacity and observation of her descriptions with which she depicts home life in the suburbs, a career on the airwaves, or coming out in Lake Forest.

K. S.

International

WAR, PEACE AND CHANGE. By John Foster Dulles. Harpers. 1939. $1.75.

Books on the causes of war and the possibilities for peace are likely to be composed of either pyrotechnic oversimplifications or closely reasoned abstractions applied to current world problems. In the former category falls the vast array of panacea proposals; in the latter, the rare, careful analysis of the most vital and baffling issue confronting humanity today. To this scanty literature Mr. Dulles has made a notable addition. He has begun by investigating the methods used to eliminate violence within the state—methods compounded of the ethical sentiments of mankind, which stress the emotional desire for unselfishness and the social good, and of political organizations operating through law, which preserve a tolerable balance between the aspirations of those who desire change and those who oppose it. From these factors springs the modern state. Paradoxically, however, the centralization of authority in the state and the will to self-sacrifice for its good have created a world of anarchy as between states themselves. No simplistic solution like those embodied in the Kellogg Pact, the League of Nations, or the philosophy of national isolation can alone suffice to prevent war.

Something far more difficult to achieve is needed. On the ethical plane the tendency to excoriate certain foreign nations as if they were diabolic personalities must be overcome. A spiritual ideal transcending national lines must replace the latter-day religion of nationalism. Excessive economic and political compartmentation behind national boundary lines resembling Chinese walls must be discouraged. And in the political field steps must be taken to avoid the rigidities giving rise to "have-not" psychology. Something approximating the changes which would be made by an effectively func-

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tioning international authority must be made by the *status quo* powers today and tomorrow—before they are made at the point of a gun.

This is not a particularly novel doctrine, nor does it promise quick results. It is by no means adequate in meeting some of the questions raised by current, conflicting ideologies and economic interests. But it is a clear, able, and honest analysis of a problem which must be solved if civilization is to survive.

D. H. P.

Miscellaneous

THE ART OF THE BOOK. By Bernard H. Newdigate. New York: Studio Publications. 1938. Paper, $3.50; cloth, $4.50.

DESIGNED BOOKS. Edited by Raphael McGehee. New York: E. Weyhe. 1938. $3.

Here are two books which somehow contrive to offset each other—and to leave the seeker for information about what a well-designed book is, as much in the dark as ever. Mr. Newdigate has, for the third time in twenty-five years, summarized in a Studio publication the state of the "book arts." His first book showed the end of the "private press" era and the cutting of special fonts of type; his second appeared after the type founders had awakened to the vast store of good type faces available for resurrection; his third comes a bit late to mark the book designer's surfeit with fine types and his nervous quest for something different. Except in a few instances, such as the work of Dwiggins, Gill, the Penguin Classics, and some others, the work illustrated is good honest work of the traditional sort. (Personally we like this sort of work, but we recognize the hurricane around us.) There is no indication of the furore over the new scripts, sans serifs, "antiques," "Ionics," which now dominate our typography; no suggestion of the mischief played with good printing paper by the demands of the offset process, no hint of the awfulness of spiral bindings, no glimpse of the topsy-turvy arrangements which starting with the advertisement have crept into book work and threaten to ruin it. It is pleasantly retrospective, but gives no indication of present trends in printing.

"Designed Books," quite to the contrary, is as sure of where it is going, as careless of the past, as Mr. Hitler. It deals with a young Western book designer whose work frequently gives us the jitters, but who has something to say. His books are sometimes very bad: his "Trip to Greece" is "planned" to the last degree, but as ugly to hold as any book can be; his "Capture of Inspiration" must have made that jade wince while exulting in the capture. But there is about his work a somewhat heavy-handed mastery of space and form, an untrammeled attack on the details of book construction, new in this country. If you have ever tried to find a light, airy, cheerful restaurant in, say, Bridgeport or New Haven, your first experience of a Los Angeles "Drive In" eating place will be one of rapturous joy; after looking over the season's product of the American book printers, we feel somewhat the same way about Merle Armitage's books.

C. P. R.

TOMORROW IN THE MAKING. Edited by John N. Andrews and Carl A. Marsden. Whittlesey House. 1939. $3.

In this compact and well edited volume twenty-six American writers discuss a wide range of subjects, *e. g.*, education, propaganda, academic freedom, technology and planned economy, coöperation, the merit system, municipal reform, taxation, social security, agriculture, the Supreme Court, international affairs. While most of the writers do indulge in prophecy, as the title chosen for the collection indicates, they are circumspect in their forecasts. Moreover, being many men of many minds, they differ widely about the future. Thus within the space of six chapters the reader learns that "capitalism will survive" (Sokolsky); that "fascism is a way out" (Dennis); also that "communism points the way" (Browder). On the whole, however, the prophetic character of the book is a side issue. Its chief usefulness lies in the succinct accounts which it presents of the recent past and of existing conditions in many important fields. Thus Mr. Henry C. Wolfe's twenty pages on "The International Scene" could hardly be improved upon as a brief statement of all important events from Versailles to Munich.

In the preface to "Tomorrow in the Making" the editors distinguish between *popularizing* (presentation of essentials in a relevant and interesting way) and *vulgarizing* a subject. No one can charge that their book errs in the latter way. If any criticism along this line be warranted it is that most of the contributors are a trifle too academic in their approach. Almost alone among them Warden Lawes of Sing Sing stands out because of the warm human sympathy displayed in his excellent chapter on "Crime: a Social Cancer."

R. C. B.

WOMEN AND THE REVOLUTION. By Ethel Mannin. Dutton. 1939. $3.

The primary purpose of this book, dedicated to the anarchist leader Emma Goldman, is to convince women first, that revolutions are constructive, not merely destructive; and second, that women can achieve economic and social progress only by collaboration with men in the task of building a classless society. To illustrate her argument, Ethel Mannin marshals rather sketchy life stories of women who have played some part in revolutionary movements, from Mme. Roland, calmly facing the guillotine, to Emma Goldman, recapturing in war-torn Spain some of the earlier fervor of militant anarchism. In this gallery the most memorable portraits are those of the often neglected Russian women who, long before the Bolshevik revolution, staked life and liberty on acts of individual terrorism—some of whom, like Maria Spiridonova, lived to see their youthful dreams tarnished by the realities of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

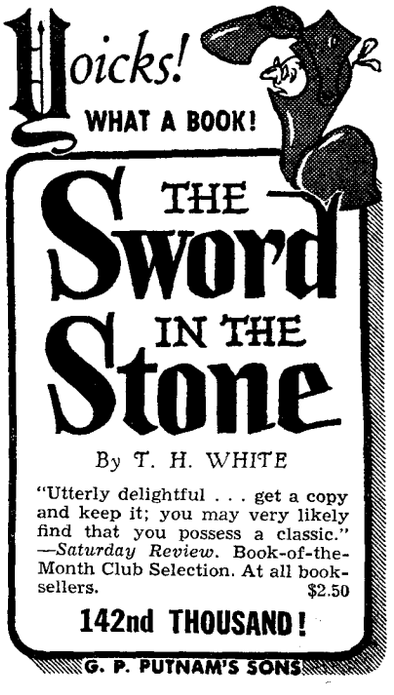
Of particular interest to American readers are the chapters discussing how social revolution would affect women in England in relation to such major problems as marriage and divorce, motherhood, education, wage-earning, and war. Miss Mannin's description of the life women would lead in a classless society liberated from the profit motive is animated both by generous idealism and sound common sense; and many of her proposals can already be found at work, even if sometimes haltingly, in the United States. What weakens her argument is the easy assumption that, having overthrown the existing system—presumably by peaceful revolution, since she does not seem to anticipate a bloody civil war like that of Russia or Spain—we can immediately establish an ideal classless society, peculiarly free from those frictions and conflicts which throughout history have characterized relations between individuals and groups. Nor is it clear by what miracle Ethel Mannin believes that such a society would avoid the rise of that bureaucracy which, in her opinion, has vitiated the very real gains made by women in the course of the Russian revolution.

V. M. D.

Philosophy

REALITY. By Paul Weiss. Princeton University Press. 1938. $3.50.

The theory of knowledge (epistemology) and the theory of existence (ontology), two disciplines still alive but definitely diseased, find a new doctor in the author of this book. As its title indicates, the book concerns reality. The first part, "Knowledge and Ignorance," considers how reality may be known and the second, "Plurality and Process," attempts to demonstrate what reality is. The mathematical prose rushes along like an irresistible force until it bumps into the immutable fact that we are unique individuals. On that fact Weiss builds his philosophy, and discourses further on synthesis, perception, inquiry, the basic rational disciplines, logic, multiplicity and unity, time and space, persistence, motion and change, causation, the organic, and on the virtue of action. In spite of an otherwise thorough treatment, the finished system has a significant deficiency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in that it lacks a philosophy of mind. On the whole it is problematic whether the author purges epistemology and ontology of unanswered queries or whether he merely smothers them under a novel and largely unintelligible terminology.

Academicians who have sustained attacks of philosophy will read the book as a matter of course and professional duty. On its own level it may be conceded that in this book Weiss has conscientiously tried to translate the nature of reality into the language of philosophy. An opponent of obscurantism might suggest, however, that it is more important to translate it into English.

R. B.

Science

LIFE'S BEGINNING ON THE EARTH. By R. Beutner. Williams & Wilkins. 1938. $3.

Ever since his discovery of the evolutionary history of the earth, man has speculated about the possibilities of creating life synthetically. In this speculation he aims, not at the construction of an elaborate multicellular organism, nor for that matter of a single and yet complex cell, but simply to produce any entity which possesses the fundamental characteristics of living organisms, the power of growth and self-regeneration, and which perhaps presents one or more activities identifying its unique nature. This speculation comes closer to actualization each year, as one after another of the ancient distinctions between the living and the non-living world is broken down. The last few years have seen the definition of a "living organism" drastically changed by the preparation of crystalline filtrable viruses by W. M. Stanley and others. These viruses are the cause of disease in plants and animals; they are considered by most investigators to be alive; yet, separated in the crystalline state and made available as chemically pure proteins, they must be considered to be distinct chemical compounds. Accepting these facts, the chemist and physiologist turn again to the question, where is the boundary line between the living and the dead?

In "Life's Beginning on the Earth" Professor Beutner's theme is the theory that life first came into existence upon the earth in consequence of the electro-synthesis of relatively complex carbon compounds. In developing this theme he draws upon many lines of evidence that throw light upon the nature of living organisms and the processes of growth, movement, and reproduction. His presentation is simple and devoid of mathematics and technical terms, and will appeal to those who have contemplative, philosophical, or inquisitive minds.

H. W. S.

Travel

SEVEN SEAS ON A SHOESTRING. By Dwight Long. Harpers. 1939. $3.

It is the healthy dream of most land-bound boys to follow the sun on such a cruise as that of young Dwight Long, to set out in an intimate craft for Hawaii, Tahiti, New Guinea, where head-hunters live, to the magic Indies, to Arabia and Egypt and Spain, even if there they must see their castles tumbling in revolution. Dwight made the journey in a 32-foot ketch and earned his adventures in various ingenious ways. He took paying passengers from port to port, chartered out his vessel, made a roaming museum of it, and charged admission. He wrote and lectured, and when all else failed he blithely worked on other boats for the wherewithal to continue on his own. It was a valiant venture, endangered by storms, near collisions, and hidden reefs, brightened and made tragic finally by the Tahitian boy he took to Ceylon. He was in Samoa during the annual resurgence of the ghostly coral worms, and in Komodo to shudder before the giant dragon lizards which Mr. Lawrence Griswold used to pull around by the tail. He had nasty moments with the fanatics of Arabia and Spain, and arrived at Long Island Sound only to be wrecked in the recent hurricane.

For 35,000 miles his dream had led him by the bowsprit, yet what did he see? He saw the sea. He was such a zealous mariner that the strangest lands either meant nothing to him or were too vaguely recalled to furnish a book with much more than their landfall outlines. The great wanderers he encountered—Alain Gerbault, Beatrice Grimshaw, Zane Grey, Nordhoff and Hall—were less vivid than corposants, you would say, and apparently he could not be bothered with accuracy in place names and nautical history. But there is a good deal of charm in this tale of a minor Magellan; his writing is boyish but it is alive with enthusiasm, and through it you come to know gladly a lad who is unafraid to leap horizons to catch a dream.

H. D.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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PERSONALS

INFORMATION PLEASE . . . Which new York City hotel appeals to literary people because it is near riding trails and ponds and trees; away from traffic's jangling tangle; yet only across the street from the Hayden Planetarium, two minutes from the American Museum of Natural History, and fifteen each from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Public Library in the heart of town? The answer is the Hotel Standish Hall, situated just off Central Park at 45 West 81st Street. Several rooms cost no more than one at many midtown caravansaries. Newly furnished and decorated 1 room apartment and suites—parlor, bedroom, bath—from $75 to $190 a month. Rate by the day or week as well. Kitchens in the suites have breakfast nooks, refrigerators and gas stoves for those who wish to practice their local cookery. But the hotel has an excellent dining room. (Caution: Make 1939 World's Fair reservations early.) Please identify yourself as an SRL reader when writing. Harry A. Day, Manager.

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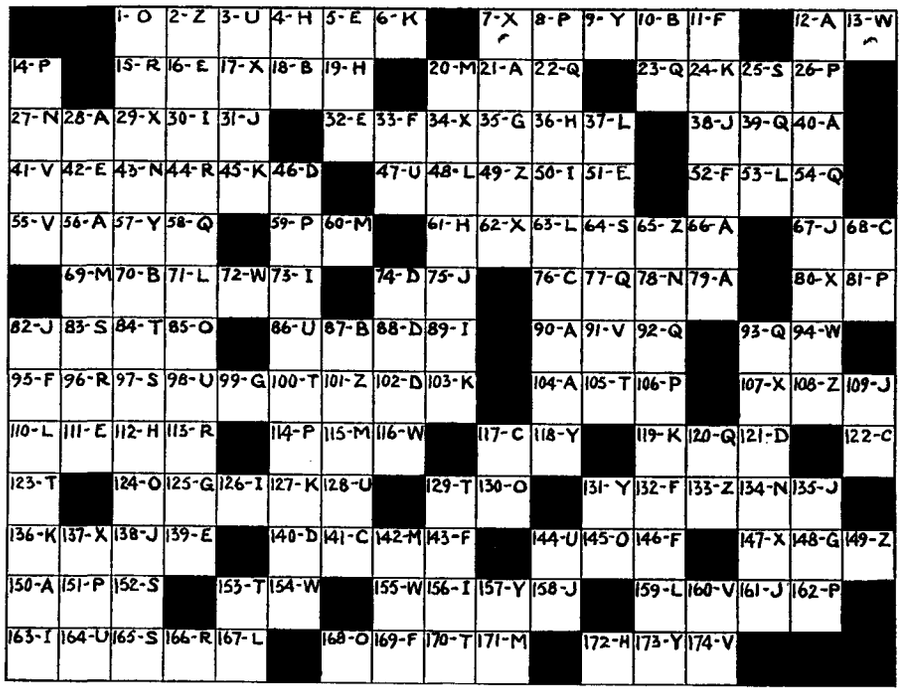
Double-Crostics: No. 254

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 14 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Scene of "Return of the Native" (2 wds.).
B. To lie in wait.
C. Opera by Massenet.
D. Historical drama by Goethe.
E. Am. Woman novelist (1886-).
F. Author of "Emile."
G. Title-character in opera by Borodin.
H. Large American vulture.
I. Author of "The Freedom of the Will."
J. Devoted to enjoyment.
K. Dramatic poem by Byron.
L. Endeavorer.
M. Canto poem by Scott.
N. Annoys, bores.
O. Fastidious (coll.).
P. King of Wessex, 866-871.
Q. Poet Laureate (1692) (2 wds.)
R. Humble.
S. Begone (imp., Shakes.).
T. Wagnerian sword.
U. Valiant (humorous).
V. Grimace (n., coll.).
W. One of the Greek Fates.
X. Later.
Y. American composer (1882-).
Z. Applicant for admission.

WORDS

66 150 40 21 90 56 79 104 12 28
18 70 87 10
76 141 122 68 117
102 46 140 88 121 74
139 16 32 5 111 42 51
33 169 52 11 95 143 132 146
35 99 148 125
61 112 36 19 172 4
126 73 89 156 30 50 163
38 31 75 158 138 161 109 67 82 135
119 24 45 136 103 127 6
63 37 167 48 159 71 53 110
171 60 142 115 69 20
134 43 78 27
124 1 145 130 85 168
8 14 59 81 151 114 162 26 106
39 120 23 22 58 93 77 92 54
166 44 15 96 113
64 25 97 165 83 152
129 123 153 100 170 105 84
128 164 98 86 47 3 144
41 174 91 160 55
155 72 94 116 13 154
29 147 80 137 62 7 34 17 107
131 118 173 57 157 9
108 133 161 149 2 49 65

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

NOTHING is more exciting to Old Q. than the reports of college presidents. He loves to brood over the difficult problems of educators, which he does not himself have to solve; though his secret ambition, which he hopes to attack about the year 1940, is to write a college textbook on the English Language. ☞*Bookworm, break this sloth urbane,* as Emerson (wish New England didn't still call him *Mr.* Emerson) said in his admirable poem *Monadnoc,* might be the motto of such a book. ☞Like Emerson's mountain, Old Q. is a "grand affirmer of the present tense." ☞In the recent annual report of the president of Harvard to his Board of Overseers, we found much noteworthy. President Conant quotes, but charitably does not identify, "a prominent official of a national educational association" who believes that the best modern English, and that most worth study by the pupil, is "the English spoken and written by the American business man."

☞At the Harvard Summer School last summer every State in the union was represented except Idaho, which presumably was busy with potatoes. ☞The Nieman Fellowships in Journalism have been successful enough to be continued. This endowment made it possible to invite 9 practising journalists to spend a year at Harvard in any kind of study they wished; their stipend to correspond to the salary sacrificed by their leave of absence. The Fellows meet for dinner once a week, under the chairmanship of Archibald MacLeish, to discuss the problems of American journalism, "whose interest and enthusiasm," President Conant says, "have given this unusual undertaking a good start." ☞Applications for the Nieman Fellowships for 1939-40 will be received until March 1st. The first year there were about 400 applicants. If the news gets round there might easily be 4,000. ☞A memorable phrase concludes President Conant's fine summary: "we ask for the privilege of opening further new vistas in the heavy growth of man's ignorance."

☞All lovers of fine craftsmanship are shocked at the tragic destruction by fire of the Village Press at Marlboro, N. Y. This was the beautiful workshop that Frederic W. Goudy had remodelled (from an old water-mill) for his work in type-designing. The drawings and patterns of many of Mr. Goudy's fonts were lost. Fortunately the drawings of his latest type-face, just completed for the University of California, had been sent off only a few days before the disaster. ☞The sympathy of all typophiles goes out to Mr. Goudy in this grievous loss.

☞Interest has been roused in England by Philip Guedalla's article in the *Times Lit. Supp.* urging that the history of the United States be taught in English schools. ☞One of the things that has always amused us is the obscure and small-scale maps of the U. S. shown in British atlases. ☞The most charming idea for a New Year's card was that of Robert Steele in London who sent to his friends a facsimile reprint of his Life Admission card to the Reading Room of the British Museum, dated Dec. 26, 1888. "It recalls to me," he says, "fifty years' pleasurable study, with the constant help and understanding sympathy of every official." ☞Raymond Adams (Chapel Hill, N. C.) in the January issue of his always welcome *Thoreau Newsletter,* suggests that Thoreauvians write to the Board of Selectmen at Concord appealing against any more filling stations on the road to Walden Pond. ☞The book that received the Southern Authors' Award this year was *Blow for a Landing* by Ben Lucien Burman. ☞Compton Mackenzie, in a lively article in *John o' London's* called *When All the Publishers Said "No,"* describes his early adventures in authorship. He remarks "Nowadays I could count on the fingers of one hand the publishers who decide on their own judgment about the fate of a MS. And that is the great weakness of modern publishing."

☞When Compton Mackenzie's first novel *The Passionate Elopement* was published (1911) he presuaded Martin Secker to advertise in the "tube lifts" (viz. elevators in subway stations) but omitted the one at South Kensington because the descent there is so short. ☞It is good to hear Mr. Mackenzie praising Martin Secker's "exquisite taste" in book production, for Mr. Secker rediscovered book manufacture as an art, and many collectors in this country who have scarcely heard of him have formed their taste on his ideas. ☞There are still many readers who probably have never seen a really beautiful book nor can imagine what one would look like. ☞Everyone knows the little so-called Quaker Calendar, printed in red and blue with brief cheerful quotations sprinkled through the months. Its origin, editing and distribution have always been a mystery to us. This year, for the first time, we have caught it in an error. For the month of April 1939 it quotes "Abram Lindsey Gordon." The Australian poet's name was Adam Lindsay Gordon.

☞Always trudging a long way behind the procession, we were excited last year when we read *Mr. Zero,* a very good thriller by Patricia Wentworth. We then discovered that Miss Wentworth had written 30 or more excellent novels, and the rental libraries know her well. But she is much better than that; her new grisly *Lonesome Road* has somewhat the flavor and foreboding skill of *Rebecca,* and her little "Enquiry Agent" Miss Silver is a real character. Remove the jacket of this book (which makes it look like a juvenile) and try it on your Belloc Lowndes fans. ☞The Hampshire Bookshop, Northampton, Mass. is arranging a Book Festival for the Connecticut Valley, April 17-22, and plans exhibits and speakers of special interest to all book-lovers "from Hanover to Hartford."

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